

THE TALES OF TCHEHOV

VOL IX

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS

—AND OTHER STORIES

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THE SCHOOLMISTRESS

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS

At half past eight they drove out of the town

The highroad was dry a lovely April sun was shining warmly but the snow was still lying in the ditches and in the woods Winter dark long, and spiteful was hardly over spring had come all of a sudden But neither the warmth nor the languid transparent woods warmed by the breath of spring nor the black flocks of birds flying over the huge puddles that were like lakes nor the marvellous fathomless sky into which it seemed one would have gone away so joyfully presented anything new or interesting to Marya Vassilyevna, who was sitting in the cart For thirteen years she had been schoolmistress and there was no reckoning how many times during all those years she had been to the town for her salary and whether it were spring as now or a rainy autumn evening or winter it was all the same to her and she always—invariably—longed for one thing only to get to the end of her journey as quickly as could be

She felt as though she had been living in that part of the country for ages and ages for a hundred years and it seemed to her that she knew every stone every tree on the road from the town to her

school. His past was here, her present was here, and he would imagine no other future than the school, the road to the town and back again, and again the school and again the road.

She had got out of the habit of thinking of her past before she became a schoolmistress, and had almost forgotten it. She had once had a father and mother; they had lived in Moscow in a big flat near the Red Gate, but of all that life there was left in her memory only something vague and fluid like a dream. Her father had died when she was ten years old and her mother had died soon after.

She had a brother, an officer. At first they used to write to each other, then her brother had given up answering her letters; he had got out of the way of writing. Of her old belongings all that was left was a photograph of her mother, but it had grown dim from the dampness of the school, and now nothing could be seen but the hair and the eyes.

When they had driven a couple of miles, old Semyon, who was driving the round and said:

"They have caught a government clerk in the town. They have taken him away. The story is that with some German he killed Alexey in the May in Moscow."

"Who told you that?"

"They were reading it in the paper in Ivan Ikonov's tavern."

And again they were silent for a long time. Mitya Vassilyevna thought of her school, of the examination that was coming soon, and of the girl and four boys he was sending for it. And just

as she was thinking about the examination she was overtaken by a neighbouring landowner called Hanov in a carriage with four horses the very man who had been examiner in her school the year before. When he came up to her he recognized her and bowed.

Good mornin' he said to her. You are driving home I suppose.

Thus Hanov a man of forty with a listless expression and a face that showed signs of wear was beginning to look old but was still handsome and admired by women. He lived in his big homestead alone and was not in the service and people used to say of him that he did nothing at home but walk up and down the room whistling or play chess with his old footman. People said too that he drank heavily. And indeed at the examination the year before the very papers he brought with him smelt of wine and scent. He had been dressed all in new clothes on that occasion and Marya Vassilyevna thought him very attractive and all the while she sat beside him she had felt embarrassed. She was accustomed to see frigid and sensible examiners at the school while this one did not remember a single prayer or know what to ask questions about and was exceedingly courteous and delicate giving nothing but the highest marks.

I am going to visit Bakvist he went on addressing Marya Vassilyevna but I am told he is not at home.

They turned off the highroad into a by road to the village Hanov leading the way and

Semyon filled wing. The four horses moved at a walking pace with effort dragging the heavy carriage through the mud. Semyon tumbled from side to side keeping to the edge of the road, at one time through the snow-drift at another through a pool often jumping out of the cart and helping the horse. Marya Vassilyevna was still thinking about the school work during which the arithmetic questions at the examination could be difficult or easy. And she felt annoyed with the Zhest board at which she had failed the day before. How unbusiness-like! He who had been asking them for the last two years to dismiss the watchman who did nothing as rude to her and to the schoolboys but now paid any attention. It was hard to find the president at the office and when one did find him he would say with tears in his eyes that he had not a moment to spare. The inspector visited the school at most once in three years and knew nothing whatever about her work as he had been in the Education Department and had received the post of school inspector through influence. The School Council met very rarely and there was no knowing where it met. The school guardian was an almost illiterate peasant the head teacher a business intelligent rude and a great find of humaneness and goodness knew that whom she could appeal with complaints. Enquiries.

He really is handsome she thought glancing at Han.

The road grew worse and worse. They drove into the wood. Here the wheels began to turn

round the wheels sank deeply in water splashed and gurgled through them and sharp twigs struck them in the face

What a road! said Hanov and he laughed

The schoolmistress looked at him and could not understand why this queer man lived here What could his money his interesting appearance his refined bearing do for him here in this mud in this God-forsaken dreary place? He got no special advantages out of life and here like Semyon was driving at a jog trot on an appalling road and enduring the same discomforts Why live here if one could live in Petersburg or abroad? And one would have thought it would be nothing for a rich man like him to make a good road instead of this bad one to avoid enduring this misery and seeing the despair on the faces of his coachman and Semyon but he only laughed and apparently did not mind and rated no better life He was kind soft naive and he did not understand this coarse life just as at the examination he did not know the payers He subscribed nothing to the school but globes and genuinely regarded himself as a useful person and a prominent worker in the cause of popular education And what use were his globes here?

Hold on Vassilyevna said Semyon

The cart lurched violently and was on the point of upsetting something heavy rolled on to Marya Vassilyevna's feet—it was her parcel of purchases There—as a steep ascent up through the clay here in the winding ditches rivulets were gurgling The water seemed to have gnawed away the road

and how could one get along here. The horses breathed hard. Ilano got out of his carriage and walked at the side of the road in his long overcoat. He was hot.

What a road, he said and laughed again. It would soon smash up his carriage.

No body obliges you to drive about in such weather, said Semyon surlily. You should stay at home.

I am dead at home, grandfather. I don't like staying at home.

Beside old Semyon he looked graceful and vigorous, but yet he felt that there was something just perceptible which betokened in him a being already touched by decay. Weak and on the road to ruin. And all at once there was a shift of spirits in the mood. Mary Vasilyevna was filled with dread and pity for them, meaning to hurry on for no visible cause or reason, and it came into her mind that if he had been his wife or sister she would have devoted her whole life to saving him from ruin. His wife, Lisa, as so ordered that he was living in his great house alone and she was living in a God-forsaken village alone, and yet for some reason the more she thought of this and how might he live to see another and equals seemed impossible and absurd. In reality life was arranged and human relations were complicated so utterly beyond all understanding that when one thought about it one felt uncanny and somewhat sick.

And it is beyond understanding, she thought, why God gives beauty to his gracious-

ness and sad sweet eyes to weak unlucky use less people—why they are so charming

Here we must turn off to the right said Hanov getting into his carriage Good bye ' I wish you all things good '

And again she thought of her pupils of the examination of the watchman of the School Council and when the wind brought the sound of the retreating carriage these thoughts were mingled with others She longed to think of beautiful eyes of love of the happiness which would never be

His wife? It was cold in the morning there was no one to heat the stove the watchman disappeared the children came in as soon as it was light bringing in snow and mud and making a noise it was all so inconvenient so comfortless Her abode consisted of one little room and the kitchen close by Her head ached every day after her work and after dinner she had heart burn She had to collect money from the school children for wood and for the watchman and to give it to the school guardian and then to entreat him—that overfed insolent peasant—for God's sake to send her wood And at night she dreamed of examinations peasants snowdrifts And this life was making her grow old and coarse making her ugly angular and awkward, as though she were made of lead She was always afraid and she would get up from her seat and not venture to sit down in the presence of a member of the Zemstvo or the school guardian And she used formal deferential expressions when she spoke of

any one of them. And no one thought her attractive, and life was passing drearily without affection, without friendly sympathy, without interest in acquaintances. How awful it would have been in her position if she had fallen in love.

Hold on, Vassily-na.

Again a sharp ascent uphill.

She had become a schoolmistress from necessity without feeling any vocation for it and she had no enthusiasm for a vocation, for serving the cause of enlightenment and that always seemed to her that what was most important in her work was not the children, not enlightenment but the examinations. And what time had she for thinking of vocation, of serving the cause of enlightenment? Teachers, badly paid doctors, and their assistants, with their terribly hard work, had not even the comfort of thinking that they are serving an idea or the people as their heads are always stuffed with thoughts of their daily bread, of wood for the fire, of bad roads, of illnesses. It is a hard work, an uninteresting life, and only silent, patient cart horses like Marya Vassilyevna could put up with it for long. The highly nervous, impressionable people who talked about vocation and service, the idea were soon weary of it and gave up the work.

Semyon kept picking out the driest and shortest way first by a meadow then by the backs of the village houses but in our place the peasants would not let them pass, in another it was the priest's land and they could not cross it in either direction. I had bought a pot from the landowner and

had dug a ditch round it. They kept having to turn back.

They reached Nizhneye Goroditche. Near the tavern on the dung strewn earth where the snow was still lying there stood waggons that had brought great bottles of crude sulphuric acid. There were a great many people in the tavern, all drivers, and there was a smell of vodka, tobacco and sheepskins. There was a loud noise of conversation and the banging of the swing door. Through the wall without ceasing for a moment came the sound of a concertina being played in the shop. Marya Vassilyevna sat down and drank some tea while at the next table peasants were drinking vodka and beer, perspiring from the tea they had just swallowed and the stifling fumes of the tavern.

I say, Kuzma! voices kept shouting in confusion. What there! The Lord bless us.

Ivan Dementyitch. I can tell you that. Look out, old man!

A little pock marked man with a black beard who was quite drunk was suddenly surprised by something and began using bad language.

What are you swearing at, you there? Semyon who was sitting some way off responded angrily. Don't you see the young lady?

The young lady, someone mimicked in another corner.

Swinish crow.

We meant nothing, said the little man in confusion. I beg your pardon. We pay with our money and the young lady with hers. Good morning!

THE TALKS OF TCHERHOV

Good morning, we heard the school stress

A few of the boys almost feel

Mary Val'kova's tea with satisfaction and a few began to feel like the peasant little folk going about firewood about the water.

Stay, old man, I had from the next table a little of the same from Vasyl'ev

Well, what is your good your lady

She is ill, he

Then the women really began some coming in the evening. Mary Val'kova sat on the kitchen floor, and the others while the company went on playing. The patients for the first time on the floor then they passed it to the wall and disappeared. It was the first time it was past midnight. The patients for the first time were getting ready to go. The little man somewhat uneasily went to put Mary Val'kova and held this little to her. Following his example the others shook their heads at parting and went out after their and the wing door squeaked and slammed many times.

Vasyl'evna got ready. Semyon called to her. They set off. Arlaga and they went at a walking pace.

A little while back they were building a school here in the village. G. Oditsky said Semyon turned round. It was a wicked thing that was done.

Why, what?

They say the president put a thousand in his

pocket and the school guardian another thou and in his and the teacher five hundred

The whole school only cost a thousand It's wrong to slander people grandfather That's all nonsense

I don't know I only tell you what folks say

But it was clear that Semyon did not believe the schoolmistress The peasants did not believe her They always thought she received too large a salary twenty one roubles a month (five would have been enough) and that of the money that she collected from the children for the firewood and the watchman the greater part she kept for herself The guardian thought the same as the peasants and he himself made a profit off the firewood and received payment from the peasants for being a guardian—without the knowledge of the authorities

The forest thank God was behind them and now it would be flat open ground all the way to Vyazovye and there was not far to go now They had to cross the river and then the railway line and then Vyazovye was in sight

Where are you driving? Marya Vassilyevna asked Semyon Take the road to the right to the bridge

Why we can go this way as well It's not deep enough to matter

Mind you don't drown the horse

What?

Look Hanov is driving to the bridge said Marya Vassilyevna seeing the four horses far away to the right It is he I think

It is S i d l t f r i l l a k v i t a t h o m e
 What p a h a l i f l l a w h i s L o r d h a v e m e r c y
 u p o n u s H e d n n e t h e r e a n d w h a t f o r ?
 I t s f u l l y t w o m i l e s w r i t s w a y

They e x c h i t l e r r In the summer it
 w a s l i t t l e t r a m c a l l y c r o s s e d b y w a d i n g I t
 u s u a l l y d r e d u p i n A u t u m n b u t n o w a f t e r t h e
 s p r i n g f l o o d I t w a s a m e r f u l t h i n g t o t r a v e l
 j o y f u l l y a n d c o u l d o n l y t h i n k a n d r i g h t
 u p t o t h e w a t e r t h e r e c r o s s e d t o t h e k o f w h e e l s
 s o i t l i d b e n o o t h e r

G o n h u t d e n n a l a d a n s i o u s l y
 t r a v e l l i n g v i o l e n t l y t h e d j e r k i n g h i s
 t h o w s a b o u t d o e s t w o c o n

The l o r s e w e n t o n t h e w a t e r p o l i s b e l l y
 a n d t o p p e d b u t t h e y e n t e r e d i n w i t h a n
 e f f o r t a n d M a r y a V a s s i l y n o w a r e o f a k e e n
 c h i l l e s i n h e e f t

G o o n t h e t o x h u t d g e t t i n g p o n y G o
 o n !

T h e y g o t o u t o n t h e b a c k

N o m e s s t h i s L o r d h a v e m e r c y u p o n u s
 m i t t e r e d S r y s e t t i n g t h e t h i n g s
 I t s a p e r f e c t p l a n w i t h t h e z e m t o

H e r s h o e s a d g l o s t a w r i l l i n g t r a v e l
 t h e l o w e r p a r t o f h e r d e s a n d t h e o u t e r o n e
 l e e w e r e e t a n d d i p p i n g t h e s a r a n d f l o r
 f a d g t w o t a n d t h e t w a w o r s t f a l l a n d M a r y a
 V a s s i l y c o u l d o n l y l a s p h e e n d s i n d e s p a i r
 a n d s a y

O h S e m y n S e m y n H o w t h e s o m e y o u
 e a l l y !

T h e b a c k w e n d o w n t h e r a i l w a y c r o s s i n g

A train was coming out of the station. Marya Vassilyevna stood at the crossing waiting till it should pass and shivering all over with cold. Vyazovye was in sight now and the school with the green roof and the church with its crosses flashing in the evening sun and the station windows flashed too and a pink smoke rose from the engine and it seemed to her that everything was trembling with cold.

Here was the train the windows reflected the gleaming light like the crosses on the church it made her eyes ache to look at them. On the little platform between two first class carriages a lady was standing and Marya Vassilyevna glanced at her as she passed. Her mother! What a resemblance! Her mother had had just such luxuriant hair just such a brooch and bend of the head. And with amazing distinctness for the first time in those thirteen years there rose before her mind a vivid picture of her mother her father her brother their flat in Moscow the aquarium with little fish everything to the tiniest detail she heard the sound of the piano her father's voice she felt as she had been then young good looking well dressed in a bright warm room among her own people. A feeling of joy and happiness suddenly came over her she pressed her hands to her temples in an ecstasy and called softly beseechingly.

Mother

And she began crying she did not know why. Just at that instant Hanov drove up with his team of four horses and when she imagined happy

ness, she was sad, had never laughed and smiled and
 nodded to her as neighbor and a friend, and it
 seemed to her that her happiness, her triumph
 was finished by her father and mother
 had died. She had never been a school
 mistress, it was all a tedious strange dream
 and now it had ended.

Why, she thought

At once the carriage had stopped. The driver was
 suddenly seized by a violent pain in the back and
 numb with fatigue, he had to get out. The carriage
 with the four horses crossed the railway line.
 Semyon followed it. The signalman took off
 his cap.

And her only joy, her whole life

A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

A NEPVOUS BREAK DOWN

I

A MEDICAL student called Mayer and a pupil of the Moscow School of Painting Sculpture and Architecture called Pybnikov went one evening to see their friend Vassilyev a law student and suggested that he should go with them to S Street. For a long time Vasilyev would not consent to go but in the end he put on his great coat and went with them.

He knew nothing of fallen women except by hearsay and from books and he had never in his life been in the houses in which they live. He knew that there are immoral women who under the pressure of fatal circumstances—environment bad education poverty and so on—are forced to sell their honour for money. They know nothing of pure love have no children have no civil rights their mothers and sisters weep over them as though they were dead science treats of them as an evil men address them with contemptuous familiarity. But in spite of all that they do not lose the semblance and image of God. They all acknowledge their sin and hope for salvation. Of the means that lead to salvation they can avail themselves to the fullest extent. Society it is true will not forgive

people the report but with the gift of God St Mary of Egypt was holier than the other saints. When it happened that Vassiliev in the street to recognize a tall woman as such by her dress or her manner it seemed to him as if in a comic page he saw yet another story he had once read. Young man pure and self-sacrificing he fell in with a woman and her father to become his wife and so did she herself unworthy of such happiness. His poison.

Vassiliev died in a few days. It is turning out of the risk of Boulvard. When he came out of the house with his wife it was about the noon. The first snow had not long fallen and all nature was under the spell of the fresh snow. There was the wind now in the air the snow was held still and the feet the earth the roof the trees the street with the boulevard everything was white white snow and the made the houses look quite different from the day before the tree lamp burned more brightly the air was more transparent the carriages rumbled with a deeper sound and with the fresh light frosty as a feeling stirred in the soul and to the white youthful feathery snow. Against my will an unseen force hurried the medical student in his agreeable tenor he led me to these mournful shores.

Behold the mill the artist seconded him, in ruins now.

Behold the mill in ruins now the medical student repeated, raised his eyebrows and shook his head mournfully.

He paused rubbed his forehead trying to remember the words and then sang aloud so well that passers by looked round

H l d d y h I as free
Lo f f t t d g ted m

The three of them went into a restaurant and without taking off their greatcoats drank a couple of glasses of vodka each. Before drinking the second glass Vassilyev noticed a bit of cork in his vodka raised the glass to his eyes and gazed into it for a long time screwing up his shortsighted eyes. The medical student did not understand his expression and said

Come why look at it? No philosophizing please. Vodka is given us to be drunk sturgeon to be eaten women to be visited snow to be walked upon. For one evening anyway live like a human being!

But I haven't said anything said Vassilyev laughing. Am I refusing to?

There was a warmth inside him from the vodka. He looked with softened feelings at his friends admired them and envied them. In these strong healthy cheerful people how wonderfully balanced everything is how funned and smooth is everything in their minds and souls. They sing and have a passion for the theatre and draw and talk a great deal and drink and they don't have headaches the day after they are both poetical and debauched both soft and hard they can work too and be indignant and laugh without reason and talk nonsense they are warm honest self

sacrificing and as men are in no way inferior to him. If Vassilyev who tottered over every step he took and every word he uttered who was fastidious and cautious and ready to raise every trifling thing to the level of a problem. And he longed for one evening to let his friends did to open out to let himself loose from his own control. If vodka had to be drunk he would drink it though his head would be split the next morning. If he were taken to the women he would go. He would laugh, play the fool gaily, exposed to the passing adventures of street life.

He went out of the city laughing. He liked his friends—their rough, blundering chatter with an effect of farcical stupidity. He liked them in a seal-like calm, not poor though he affected to belong to the Bohemians of learning. He liked their white palatial street lamps, the sharp black tracks left on the pavement by the feet of the passers-by. He liked their air, and especially that limpid transparent sea as it were, green like stone which can be seen in nature only twice in the year—when everything is covered with snow and in spring, on bright days and moonlight evenings when the ice breaks in the river.

Again it will be a known force
Has led me to these dreadful shores.

he hummed in an undertone

And then for some reason haunted him and his friends all the way. And all three of them hummed it mechanically, not in time with one another.

Vassilyev's imagination was picturing how in another ten minutes he and his friends would knock at a door how by little dark passages and dark rooms they would steal in to the women how taking advantage of the darkness he would strike a match would light up and see the face of a martyr and a guilty smile The unknown fair or dark would certainly have her hair down and be wearing a white dressing jacket she would be panic-stricken by the light would be fearfully confused and would say For God's sake what are you doing! Put it out! It would all be dreadful but interesting and new

II

The friends turned out of Trubnoy Square into Gratchevka and soon reached the side street which Vassilyev only knew by reputation Seeing two rows of houses with brightly lighted windows and wide-open doors and hearing gay strains of pianos and violins sounds which floated out from every door and mingled in a strange chaos as though an unseen orchestra were tuning up in the darkness above the roof Vassilyev was surprised and said

What a lot of houses!

That's nothing, said the medical student In London there are ten times as many There are about a hundred thousand such women there

The cabmen were sitting on their boxes as calmly and indifferently as in any other side street the same passers-by were walking along the pave

ment as in other streets. No one was hurrying, no one was buttoning his face in his coat-collar, no one shook his head reproachfully. And in this indifference to the noisy chaos of pianos and violins, to the bright windows and wide-open doors, there was a feeling of something very open, so not reckless and devil-may-care. Probably

was as gay and noisy as the flea-markets in that day, and people's faces and movements showed the same indifference.

Let us begin from the beginning, and the artist

The friends went into a narrow passage lighted by a lamp with a reflector. When they opened the door, a black coat with an unshaven face like a feline, and sleepy looking eyes got up lazily from a yill was on the hall. The place for it! Laundry with an odor of soap in addition. A door from the hall led into a brightly lighted room. The medical student and the artist stopped at the door and craning their necks peeped into the room.

Puona sera, ignoti in illo—hurenott—tra? began the artist with a theatrical bow.

Hi var a—tarra o—f t let said the medical student, pressing his ear to his breast and bowing low.

Vassilyev was standing behind them. He would have liked to make theatrical bows and say something very too but he only smiled, if it an awkwardness that was his harm and wanted impatiently for what would happen next.

A little fat girl of fifteen or eighteen, with

short hair in a short bright blue frock with a bunch of white ribbon on her bosom appeared in the doorway

Why do you stand at the door? she said
Take off your coats and come into the drawing room

The medical student and the artist still talking Italian went into the drawing room Vassilyev followed them irresolutely

Gentlemen take off your coats! the flunkey said sternly you can't go in like that

In the drawing room there was besides the girl another woman very stout and tall with a foreign face and bare arms She was sitting near the piano laying out a game of patience on her lap She took no notice whatever of the visitors

Where are the other young ladies? asked the medical student

They are having their tea said the fair girl Stepan she called go and tell the young ladies some students have come

A little later a third young lady came into the room She was wearing a bright red dress with blue stripes Her face was painted thickly and unskillfully her brow was hidden under her hair and there was an unblinking frightened stare in her eyes As she came in she began at once singing some song in a coarse powerful contralto After her a fourth appeared and after her a fifth

In all this Vassilyev saw nothing new or interesting It seemed to him that that room the piano the looking glass in its cheap gilt frame the

bunch of white ribbon the dress with the blue stripes and the blank indifferent faces he had seen before and more than one. Of the darkness the silence the ecstasy the guilty smile of all that he had expected to meet here and had dreaded he saw it.

Everything was ordinary, prosaic and uninteresting. Only one thing faintly stirred his curiosity—the terrible as it were intentionally designed, bad taste which was visible in the corners in the absurd pictures in the dresses in the bunch of ribbon. There was something in the character and peculiar in this bad taste.

How poor and stupid this is, thought Vasiliyev. What is there in all this trumpery I see now that can tempt a normal man and excite him to commit the horrible act of buying a human being for a rouble? I do retard myself in the sake of splendour beauty great passion taste but what is the object? What is there here worth knowing for? But one must think.

Beardy treat me to some porter, said the fair girl addressing him.

Vasulyev was at once overcome with confusion.

With pleasure, he said bowing politely.

Only excuse me madam, I—I won't drink with you, I don't drink.

Fifteen minutes later the friends went off into another house.

Why did you ask for port? said the medical student angrily. What a small amount! You have thrown away six roubles for no reason whatsoever—simply waste!

If she wants it why not let her have the pleasure? said Vassilyev justifying himself

You did not give pleasure to her but to the Madam They are told to ask the visitors to stand them treat because it is a profit to the keeper

Behold the mill hummed the artist in ruins now

Going into the next house the friends stopped in the hall and did not go into the drawing room Here as in the first house a figure in a black coat with a sleepy face like a flunkey's got up from a sofa in the hall Looking at this flunkey at his face and his shabby black coat Vassilyev thought

What must an ordinary simple Russian have gone through before fate flung him down as a flunkey here? Where had he been before and what had he done? What was waiting him? Was he married? Where was his mother and did she know that he was a servant here? And Vassilyev could not help particularly noticing the flunkey in each house In one of the houses—he thought it was the fourth—there was a little spare frail looking flunkey with a watchchain on his waistcoat He was reading a newspaper and took no notice of them when they went in Looking at his face Vassilyev for some reason thought that a man with such a face might steal might murder might bear false witness But the face was really interesting a big forehead grey eyes a little flattened nose thin compressed lips and a blankly stupid and at the same time insolent expression like that of a young harrier overtaking

a bare Van Dyke though it would be nice to touch this man's hair to see whether it was soft or coarse. It must be coarse like a cow's.

III

Having drunk two glasses of porter the artist became suddenly tipsy and grew unnaturally lively.

Let's go to another. He said peremptorily waving his hand. I will take you to the best one.

When he had brought his friend to the house which in his opinion was the best he declared his firm intention of dancing a quadrille. The medical student grumbled something about their having to pay the musicians a double but agreed to be his r-s-a-is. They began dancing.

It was just as neat in the best house as in the worst. Here there were just the same looking-glasses and pictures, the same styles of coiffure and dress. Looking round at the furnishings of the rooms and the costumes Van Dyke realized that this was not Luck of the East but something that might be called the taste, and even the style of S. Street, which could not be found elsewhere—something notional in suggestion not condensed, but elaborated in the course of years. After he had been in earth he was no longer surprised at the colour of the dresses, at the long trains, the gaudy ribbons, the sailor dresses, and the thick purple robes, or the cheeks he saw that it all had to be like this, that if a man came

of the women had been dressed like a human being or if there had been one decent engraving on the wall the general tone of the whole street would have suffered.

How unskilfully they sell themselves, he thought. How can they fail to understand that vice is only alluring when it is beautiful and hidden when it wears the mask of virtue? Modest black dresses, pale faces, mournful smiles and darkness would be far more effective than this clumsy tawdriness. Stupid things. If they don't understand it of themselves the visitors might surely have taught them.

A young lady in a Polish dress edged with white fur came up to him and sat down beside him.

You nice dandy man, why aren't you dancing?

she asked. Why are you so dull?

Because it is dull.

Treat me to some Lafitte. Then it won't be dull.

Vassilyev made no answer. He was silent for a little and then asked:

What time do you get to sleep?

At six o'clock.

And what time do you get up?

Sometimes at two and sometimes at three.

And what do you do when you get up?

We have coffee and at six o'clock we have dinner.

And what do you have for dinner?

Usually soup, beef steak and dessert. Our madam keeps the girls well. But why do you ask all this?

o THE TALES OF TCHEHOV

Oh just to talk

Vassilyev lon ed to talk to the young lady about many things. He felt an intense desire to find out wh h came from whether her parents were living and whether they knew that she was her how she had come into this house wh ther she wer cheerful and satisfied sad and oppressed by gloomy thoughts whether sh h ped som day t g t out of her pres nt position. But h could not think how t begin or in what shape to put his questions so as not t seem unpertinent. He thought for a l t m and asked

How old are you ?

En hty th y un lady jested looking with a lau h at the antics of the a t t as h dan ed

All at once sh burst out l u h g at somethin a d uttered a l ng cynical sentence loud en u h t be heard by every. Vassily was aghast and n t knowing h w t look g nstrained smile. H was the nly on who smiled all th others his friends the musicians the w men did not ven glance towards his eighbour b t seemed not to ha heard her

Stand me som Lafitt his hbour said a ain

Vassily v felt a epulse n f h wh t fur and f r her voice and walked away from her. It seemed to him h t nd stiffing and his h art began throbbl lowly but viol tly lke a hammer—on two three

Let us go away he said pulling the artist by his slec

Wait a littl let m finish

While the art t and the medical student were

finishing the quadrille to avoid looking at the women Vassilyev scrutinized the musicians. A respectable looking old man in spectacles rather like Marshal Bazaine was playing the piano a young man with a fair beard dressed in the latest fashion was playing the violin. The young man had a face that did not look stupid nor exhausted but intelligent youthful and fresh. He was dressed fancifully and with taste he played with feeling. It was a mystery how he and the respectable looking old man had come here. How was it they were not ashamed to sit here? What were they thinking about when they looked at the women?

If the violin and the piano had been played by men in rags looking hungry gloomy drunken with dissipated or stupid faces then one could have understood their presence perhaps. As it was Vassilyev could not understand it at all. He recalled the story of the fallen woman he had once read and he thought now that that human figure with the guilty smile had nothing in common with what he was seeing now. It seemed to him that he was seeing not fallen women but some different world quite apart alien to him and incomprehensible if he had seen this world before on the stage or read of it in a book he would not have believed in it.

The woman with the white fur burst out laughing again and uttered a bathos sentence in a loud voice. A feeling of disgust took possession of him. He flushed crimson and went out of the room.

Wait a minute we are coming too! the artist shouted to him.

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IV

While we were dancing and the medical student and the other two went out into the street.

I had a conversation with my partner. We talked about her first marriage. He told her that he was a native of Smolensk with a wife and five children. She was a ventriloquist and he lived with her papa and mamma, who sold soap and candies.

How did he break her heart? asked Vassilyev.

By persuading her to believe that I was doing this for her. What?

So he told her that his partner told him that out of his throat he could breathe out the medical student. But I did not know that.

I say I am going to him. He said:

What for?

Because I don't know how to behave here. Besides I am bored, disgusted. What is there amusing in it? If they were human beings—but they are snakes and animals. I am going to do as you like.

Come, Grisha, Grigory darling said the artist in a teasing voice, he is going, Vassilyev come along. Let's go to him more together and damnation take them. Please do, Grisha.

They persuaded Vassilyev and led him up a staircase. In the carpet and the gilt banisters in the porter who opened the door and in the panels that decorated the hall the same St. Petersburg style was apparent but carried to a greater perfection in its imposing

I really will go home! said Vassilyev as he was taking off his coat

Come come dear boy said the artist and he kissed him on the neck Don't be tiresome

Grigori be a good comrade! We came together we will go back together What a beast you are really!

I can wait for you in the street I think it's loathsome really

Come come Grisha If it's loathsome you can observe it Do you understand? You can observe!

One must take an objective view of things said the medical student gravely

Vassilyev went into the drawing room and sat down There were a number of visitors in the room besides him and his friend two infantry officers a bald grey haired gentle man in spectacles two beardless youths from the institute of land surveying and a very tipsy man who looked like an actor All the young ladies were taken up with these visitors and paid no attention to Vassilyev

Only one of them dressed like Aida glanced sideways at him smiled and said yawning A drink has come

Vassilyev's heart was throbbing and his face burned He felt ashamed before these visitors of his presence here and he felt disgusted and miserable He was tormented by the thought that he a decent and loving man (such as he had hitherto considered himself) hated these women and felt nothing but repulsion toward them He

felt pity neither for the women nor the musicians nor the flunkies.

It is because I am not trying to understand them better than I am. They are all more like animals than human beings, but of course they are human beings all the same; they have souls. One must understand them and then judge.

Grisha, don't get lost for us; the artist shouted to him and disappeared.

The medical student disappeared soon after.

Yes, one must make an effort to understand; one mustn't be like the Vassily who went on thinking.

Adrian began gazing at each of the women with trained attention, looking for a guilty smile. But either he didn't know what each of these faces, or not one of these women felt herself to be guilty. He read on every face, then, but a blank expression of everyday vulgar boredom and complacency. Stupid faces, stupid smiles, harsh stupid voices, insolent remarks and nothing else. Apparently each of them had its past romance with an accountant based on used clothes for fifty roubles and looked for nothing other than in the present but a free dinner of three courses, wines, quadrilles sleeping till twilight in the afternoon.

Finding no guilty smiles Vassilyev began to look whether there was not a thoughtful face. And his attention was caught by one pale, rather sleepy, exhausted looking face. It was a dark woman, not very young, wearing a dress covered with pangles. She was sitting in an easy-chair looking at the floor lost in thought. Vassilyev

walked from one corner of the room to the other and as though casually sat down beside her

I must begin with something trivial he thought and pass to what is serious

What a pretty dress you have! and with his finger he touched the gold fringe of her fichu

Oh is it? said the dark woman listlessly

What province do you come from?

I? From a distance From Tchernigov

A fine province It's nice there

Any place seems nice when one is not in it

It's a pity I cannot describe nature to you but Vassilyev I might touch her by a description of nature in Tchernigov No doubt she loves the place if she has been born there

Are you dull here? he asked

Of course I am dull

Why don't you go away from here if you are dull?

Where should I go to? Go begging or what?

Begging would be easier than living here

How do you know that? Have you begged?

Yes when I hadn't the money to study Even if I hadn't anyone could understand that A beggar is anyway a free man and you are a slave

The dark woman stretched and watched with sleepy eyes the footman who was bringing a trayful of glasses and self-service water

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St d me a glass of port r he said and yaw ed gai

P rt r th ight Vas ilje And what if y ur b th or m th r alk d n at this moment? What would y u say? And wh t would they ay Ther w ld l porter then I m in

All at or th re was the sou d of eeping From th adjoining or m f r which the footman had brou ht th lt w ter a f i man th a ed face a d a ry yes an in qu kly He was toll wed by th tall t ut m dam who was h uting a shrill

N body has g n you lea e to lap g l s on the check We ha t bett th you a d th y don t f l t Impto

A hub ub ar e Vasily w frightened and turned pale In the xt oom th e was the sound of h t t r g u n weep a th h of someo insulted And he ealized th t there were eal peopl h her w lo l k peopl very where else felt nsult d suff ed ept and cried for h lp Th feeling f opp es t h t and disgust gave w y to an cute fecl f p ty and an ainst the ggresso He ru hed i to th room her ther was weep A oss s of bottles n a marbl top t bl he dstin uished a suffern f ce wet with tears str tched o t ha h nds t wards that fa e took a step to ards the tabl b t at once drew b ck in horr The weeping gl w s drunk

A he mad his w y thr h th n y crowd gather d bout th fair m n h h art sank and he f l t frightened lik a child and it seemed to h m

that in this alien incomprehensible world people wanted to pursue him to beat him to pelt him with filthy words. He tore down his hat from the hatstand and ran headlong downstairs.

V

Leaning against the fence he stood near the house waiting for his friends to come out. The sounds of the pianos and violins gay reckless insolent and mournful mingled in the air in a sort of chaos and this tangle of sounds seemed again like an unseen orchestra tuning up on the roofs. If one looked upward into the darkness the black background was all spanned with white moving spots it was as snow falling. As the snow flakes came into the light they floated round lazily in the air like down and still more lazily fell to the ground. The snowflakes whirled thickly round Vassilyev and hung upon his beard his eyelashes his eyebrows. The cabmen the horses and the passers by were white.

And how can the snow fall in this street! thought Vassilyev. Damnation take these houses.

His legs seemed to be giving way from fatigue simply from having run down the stairs. He gasped for breath as though he had been climbing uphill. His heart beat so loudly that he could hear it. He was consumed by a desire to get out of the street as quickly as possible and to go home but even stronger was his desire to wait for his companions and vent upon them his oppressive feeling.

There was much he did not understand in these houses: the souls of ruined women were a mystery to him as before, but it was clear to him that the thing was far worse than could have been believed. If that sinful woman who had poisoned herself was called fallen, it was difficult to find a fitting name for all these who were dancing now to this tangle of soul and uttering long loathsome sentences. They were treading the road to ruin, but ruined.

There is vice here, thought, but their consciousness of sin or hope of salvation. They are sold and bought, steeped in wine and bominations, while they like sleep as stupid indifferent and don't understand. My God! My God!

It was clear to him too that everything that is called human dignity, personal in his the Divine image and semblance, were defiled to their very foundations—to the marrow—as drunkards, say—and that not only the street and the stupid women were responsible for it.

A group of students white with snow passed him laughing, and talking gaily. One, a tall thin fellow topped, glanced at Vassilyev's face, and said in a drunken voice:

One of us? A bit of an old man? Aha ha! Never mind, ha! a good time! Don't be downhearted, old chap!

He took Vassilyev by the shoulder and pressed his cold wet moustach against his cheek, then he slapped, tagged, and, waving both hands, cried:

Hold on! Don't upset!

And laughing he ran to overtake his companions.

Through the noise came the sound of the artist's voice

Don't you dare to hit the women! I won't let you damnation take you! You scoundrels

The medical student appeared in the doorway. He looked from side to side and seeing Vassilyev said in an agitated voice

You here! I tell you it's really impossible to go anywhere with Yegor. What a fellow he is! I don't understand him. He has got up a scene! Do you hear? Yegor—he shouted at the door. Yegor

I won't allow you to hit women! the artist's piercing voice sounded from above. Something heavy and lumbering rolled down the stairs. It was the artist falling headlong. Evidently he had been pushed down stairs.

He picked him self up from the ground, shook his hat and with an angry and indignant face brandished his fist towards the top of the stairs and shouted

Scoundrel! Torturers! Bloodsuckers! I won't allow you to hit them. To hit a weak drunken woman. Oh you brutes!

Yegor. Come Yegor! the medical student began imploring him. I give you my word of honour I'll never come with you again. On my word of honour I won't.

Little by little the artist was pacified and the friends went homeward.

Again to my will an unknown force hummed the medical student. Has led me to these mournful shores.

Beh! In the mill the artist chimed in a little later in ruins now. What a lot of snow. Holy Mother Grisha, why did you go? You are a funk, a regular old woman.

Vasyljev walked behind his companions, looked at their backs and thought.

One of two things: either we only fancy prostitution is an evil and we exaggerate it, or if prostitution really is as great an evil as is generally assumed, these dear friends of mine are as much slave-owners, violators and murderers as the inhabitant of Syria and Carthage that are described in the Bible. But they are strong laughing talkers, sense both in them, but they just been exploiting men and the stupid? They have been in the business of it. What is the use of their humanity then, medicine the patients? The science art and literary sentimentality of these soul-destructors is a damned piece of bacon in the story. To bribe and murder a beggar in a forest they began half an hour between them and found his wallet a piece of bacon.

We'll found, and if them let us have a bit. What do you mean? If we can you cried that then in the. Ha, very forgetful then that to-day Wednesday? And they would not let it. After murder in a man they came out of the forest in the firm conviction that they were keeping the fast. In the same way these men after buying women go the way imagining that they are artists and men of science.

Li ten then said sharply and angrily. Why do you come here? Is it possible—is it possible?

you don't understand how horrible it is? Your medical books tell you that every one of these women dies prematurely of consumption or something, art tells you that morally they are dead even earlier. Every one of them dies because she has in her time to entertain five hundred men on an average let us say. Each one of them is killed by five hundred men. You are among the five hundred! If each of you in the course of your lives visits this place or others like it two hundred and fifty times it follows that one woman is killed for every two of you! Can't you understand that? Isn't it horrible to murder two of you three of you five of you a foolish hungry woman. Ah! isn't that awful my God!

I knew it would end like that the artist said frowning. We ought not to have gone with this fool and ass. You imagine you have grand notions in your head now ideas don't you? No it's the devil knows what but not ideas. You are looking at me now with hatred and repulsion but I tell you it's better you should set up twenty more houses like those than look like that. There's more vice in your expression than in the whole street! Come along, Volodya let him go to the devil. He's a fool and an ass and that's all.

We human beings do murder each other said the medical student. It's immoral of course but philosophizing doesn't help it. Good by!

At Trubnoy Square the friends said good bye and parted. When he was left alone Vassilyev strode rapidly along the boulevard. He felt

in the end of the dark east of the snow which was falling in heavy flakes on the ground and seemed as though it would cover up the whole world. He felt frightened of the street lamps shining with pale light through the clouds of snow. His soul was possessed by an inaccountable, first-hearted terror. Passers-by came towards him from time to time but he turned away from them. It seemed to him that women were coming from all sides and staring at him.

It's beginning, he thought. I am going to have a breakdown.

VI

At home he lay on his bed and hid his face all over. There at last. VI. My God, those women. Ah.

He encouraged himself to imagine all sorts of ways to protect himself like the brother of a fallen woman, or better than the fallen woman herself with her parted cheeks and it all moved him to horror.

It seemed to him that he must settle the question at once at all cost and that the question was not one that did not concern him but was his own personal problem. He made an immense effort, repressed his despair and, sitting on the bed, held his head in his hands, began thinking how one could save himself. The memory of that day. The method for attacking problems of all kinds was as he was an educated man, well known to him. And however excited he was he strictly

adhered to that method. He recalled the history of the problem and its literature and for a quarter of an hour he paced from one end of the room to the other trying to remember all the methods practised at the present time for saving women. He had very many good friends and acquaintances who lived in lodgings in Petersburg. Among them were a good many honest and self-sacrificing men. Some of them had attempted to save women.

All these not very numerous attempts thought Vassilyev can be divided into three groups. Some after buying the woman out of the brothel took a room for her bought her a sewing machine and she became a sempstress. And whether he wanted to or not after having bought her out he made her his mistress then when he had taken his degree he went away and handed her into the keeping of some other decent man as though she were a thing. And the fallen woman remained a fallen woman. Others after buying her out took a lodging apart for her bought the inevitable sewing machine and tried teaching her to read preaching at her and giving her books. The woman lived and sewed as long as it was interesting and a novelty to her then getting bored began receiving men on the sly or ran away and went back where she could sleep till three o'clock drink coffee and have good dinners. The third class the most ardent and self-sacrificing had taken a bold resolute step. They had married them. And when the insolent and spoilt or stupid and crushed animal became

a wife the head of a household and afterwards another returned there with a serene attitude to life upon which it was hard to recognize the fallen woman. Afterward in the village and the mother's new marriage was the first and perhaps the only means.

But it is impossible. Vashek said aloud and he sank upon the bed. It is impossible with, could not marry now. That is that one must be a saint and be free of all passions. But suppose that the artist might be a saint? Suppose they were all? What would be the result? The result would be that while here in Moscow they are making some Smolensk but it would be doing a other little bit of it. It is earning here to fill the account of the others from Saratov. No, no, no. And what is it that the thousand in London? What is it with those in Hamburg?

The lamp in which the oil had been burnt smokes. Vashek did not notice it. He began pacing to and fro again till thinking. Now he put the question differently. What must be done with the fallen woman? To let her be redeemed. For that is essential that the men who buy them should feel that death should feel all the immorality of their behavior in saving them. It should be hanged. One must save the men.

One could say nothing by the and so on that

is clear thought Vassilyev The only way out of it is missionary work

And he began to dream how he would the next evening stand at the corner of the street and say to every passer by Where are you going and what for? Have some fear of God

He would turn to the apathetic cabmen and say to them Why are you staying here? Why aren't you revolted? Why aren't you indignant? I suppose you believe in God and know that it is a sin that people go to hell for it? Why don't you speak? It is true that they are strangers to you but you know even they have fathers brothers like yourselves

One of Vassilyev's friend had once said of him that he was a talented man There are all sorts of talents—talent for writing talent for the stage talent for art but he had a peculiar talent—a talent for humanity He possessed an extraordinarily fine delicate content so pain in general As a good actor reflects in himself the movements and voice of others so Vassilyev could effect in his soul the sufferings of others When he saw tears he wept beside a sick man he felt sick himself and moaned if he saw an act of violence he felt as though he himself were the victim of it he was frightened as a child and in his friend ran to help The pain of others worked on his nerves excited him roused him to a state of frenzy and soon

Whether this friend were right I don't know but what Vassilyev experienced when he thought this question was settled was something like inspi

ration. He cried and laughed, spoke aloud the words that he should say next day, felt a fervent love for those who would listen to him and would stand beside him at the corner of the street to preach, he sat down to write letters, made vows to himself.

All this was his inspiration also from the fact that it did not listen. Vassilyev was soon tired. The cases in London, in Hamburg, in Warsaw weighed upon him by their mass as a mountain weighs upon the earth, he felt disappointed, bewildered, in the face of this mass he remembered that he had not gift of words, that he was cowardly and timid, that indifferent people would not be willing to listen and understand him, a law student in his third year, a timid and insignificant person, that genuine Russian work included not only teaching but death.

When it was dark and carriages were already beginning to rumble in the street, Vassilyev was lying motionless on the sofa, staring into space. He was no longer thinking of the women, nor of the men, nor of missionary work. His whole

attention was turned upon the spiritual agony which was torturing him. It was a dull, vague, undefined anguish akin to misery, to an extreme form of terror and to despair. He could point to the place where the pain was, in his breast under his heart, but he could not compare it with any thing. In the past he had had acute toothache, he had had pleurisy and neuralgia, but all that was insignificant compared with this spiritual anguish. In the presence of that pain life seemed

loathsome The dissertation the excellent work he had written already the people he loved the salvation of fallen women—everything that only the day before he had cared about or been indifferent to now when he thought of them irritated him in the same way as the noise of the carriages the scurrying footsteps of the waiters in the passage the daylight If at that moment someone had performed a great deed of mercy or had committed a revolting outrage he would have felt the same repulsion for both actions Of all the thoughts that strayed through his mind only two did not irritate him one was that at every moment he had the power to kill himself the other that this agony would not last more than three days This last he knew by experience

After lying for a while he got up and wringing his hands walked about the room not as usual from corner to corner but round the room beside the walls As he passed he glanced at himself in the looking glass His face looked pale and sunken his temples looked hollow his eyes were bigger darker more staring as though they belonged to someone else and they had an expression of insufferable mental agony

At midday the artist knocked at the door

Grigory are you at home? he asked

Getting no answer he stood for a minute pondered and answered himself in Little Russian

Nay The confounded fellow has gone to the University

And he went away Vassilyev lay down on the bed and thrusting his head under the pillow

began crying with one hand and the other free— his tears flowed the more terrible his mental anguish became. As it began to get dark he thought of the agony that awaited him and was overcome by a terrible despair. He dressed quickly, ran out of his room and threw his door wide open for no object or reason went out into the street. Without asking him if where he should go he walked quickly along Sadovoy Street.

Snow was falling as heavily as the day before it was the wing Thruster he thrust his hands into his sleeves huddling and hurried at the rattle of the tram bells and at the passers-by Vassilyev walked along Sadovoy Street as far as Suhare Tower then to the Red Gate from there he turned off to Basmannaya Street. He went into a tavern and drank off a big glass of vodka, but that did not make him feel better. When he reached Razvulya he turned to the right and trod along the streets in which he had roamed before in his life. He reached the old bridge by which the Yauza runs gurgling and from which one can see long rows of lights in the windows of the Red Barracks. To distract his painful anguish by some new sensation or some other pain Vassilyev not knowing what to do crying and huddling, undid his greatcoat and jacket and exposed his bare chest to the wet snow and the wind. But that did not lessen his suffering either. Then he bent down over the rail of the bridge and looked down into the black, yeasty Yauza and he longed to plunge down head foremost not for nothing.

for life not for the sake of suicide but in order to bruise himself at least and by one pain to ease the other. But the black water the darkness the deserted banks covered with snow were terrifying. He shivered and walked on. He walked up and down by the Red Barracks then turned back and went down to a copse from the copse back to the bridge again.

No home home he thought At home I believe it's better

And he went back. When he reached home he pulled off his wet coat and cap began pacing round the room and went on pacing round and round without stopping till morning.

VII

When next morning the artist and the medical student went in to him he was moving about the room with his shirt torn biting his hands and moaning with pain.

For God's sake he sobbed when he saw his friend take me where you please do what you can but for God's sake save me quickly I shall kill myself

The artist turned pale and was helpless. The medical student too almost shed tears but considering that doctors ought to be cool and composed in every emergency said coldly

It's a nervous breakdown But it's nothing Let us go at once to the doctor

Where'er you like only for God's sake make haste!

Don't excite yourself. You must try and control yourself.

The artist and the medical student both trembled. Their hands put Vassily's coat and hat on and led him out into the street.

Mikhail Sergeyitch has been wanting to make your acquaintance for a long time, the medical student said on the way. He is a very nice man and thoroughly good at his work. He took his degree in 1882 and he has an immense practice already. He treats students as though he were on himself.

Make haste make haste Vasilyev urged.

Mikhail Sergeyitch that famous haughty doctor received the friend with politeness and frigid dignity and smiled only on one side of his face.

Rybnikov and May have spoken to me of your illness already, he said. Very glad to be of service to you. Will? Sit down I beg.

He made Vasilyev sit down in a big armchair near the table and made a box of cigarettes to wait for him.

Now then he began striking his knees. Let us get to work. How would it be for you?

He asked questions and the medical student answered them. He asked whether Vassilyev's father had suffered from certain special diseases whether he drank too much whether he were remarkable for anything peculiarities. He made similar inquiries about his grandfather his mother sisters and brothers. On learning that his mother had a beautiful voice and sometimes

acted on the stage he grew more animated at once and asked

Excuse me but don't you remember perhaps your mother had a passion for the stage?

Twenty minutes passed Vassilyev was annoyed by the way the doctor kept stroking his knees and talking of the same thing

So far as I understand your question doctor he said you want to know whether my illness is hereditary or not It is not

The doctor proceeded to ask Vassilyev whether he had had any secret vices as a boy or had received injuries to his head whether he had had any aberrations any peculiarities or exceptional propensities Half the questions usually asked by doctors of their patients can be left unanswered without the slightest ill effect on the health but Mikhail Sergeyitch the medical student and the artist all looked as though if Vassilyev failed to answer one question all would be lost As he received answers the doctor for some reason noted them down on a slip of paper On learning that Vassilyev had taken his degree in natural science and was now studying law the doctor pondered

He wrote a first rate piece of original work last year said the medical student

I beg your pardon but don't interrupt me you prevent me from concentrating said the doctor and he smiled on one side of his face

Though of course that does enter into the diagnosis Intense intellectual work nervous exhaustion Yes yes And do you drink vodka? he said addressing Vassilyev

THE TALES OF TCHU HOV

VASSILY

An other twenty minutes passed. The medical student began to tell the doctor in a low voice his opinion as to the moral cause of the attack and how he felt about the doctor's yesterday. The artist Vassily said he had visited S Street.

The different reserved friend tone in which his friend and the next work of the women and the mother brought the truck Vassily as trying in the time.

Doctor told me that he said controlling himself so that it is hard to be substituted in the time.

My dear friend who said that the doctor with an opinion that suggested that he had settled his heart for himself long ago.

Who does it?

You must talk to me about Vassily asked curiously.

Yes, I must talk to you.

Perhaps if you are right said Vassily getting up and beginning to talk from the end of the room to the other. Perhaps. But it all seems much better to me. That I should have taken my decision with a clear conscience upon as great a task as this because I have within work which in three years will be the own side and for getting in I am praised for that but because I cannot speak of fall now more concernedly as of these others I am being examined by a doctor I am called mad I am pitied.

Vassily for some reason felt all this once upon

utterably sorry for himself and his companions and all the people he had seen two days before and for the doctor he burst into tears and sank into a chair.

His friends looked enquiringly at the doctor. The latter, with the air of completely comprehending the tears and the despair of feeling himself a specialist in that line, went up to Vassilyev and without a word gave him some medicine to drink and then, when he was calmer, undressed him and began to investigate the degree of sensibility of the skin, the reflex action of the knees, and so on.

And Vassilyev felt easier. When he came out from the doctor, he was beginning to feel ashamed; the rattle of the carriages no longer irritated him and the load at his heart grew lighter and lighter as though it were melting away. He had two prescriptions in his hand, one was for bromide, one was for morphia. He had taken all these remedies before.

In the street he stood still and saying good-bye to his friends dragged himself languidly to the University.

MISERY

MISERY

Т у х м а л л и т л и м о г а л ?

THE twilight of evening. Big flakes of wet snow are whirling lazily about the street lamps which have just been lighted and lying in a thin soft layer on roofs horses backs shoulders caps. Iona Potapov the sled driver is all white like a ghost. He sits on the box without stirring bent as double as the living body can be bent. If a regular snow drift fell on him it seems as though even then he would not think it necessary to shake it off.

His little mare is white and motionless too. Her stillness the angularity of her lines and the stick like straightness of her legs make her look like a halfpenny gingerbread horse. She is probably lost in thought. Anyone who has been torn away from the plough from the familiar grey landscapes and cast into this slough full of monstrous lights of unceasing uproar and hurrying people is bound to think.

It is a long time since Iona and his nag have budged. They came out of the yard before dinner time and not a single fire yet. But now the shades of evening are falling on the town. The pale light of the street lamps changes to a vivid colour and the bustle of the street grows noisier.

Sledge to Vyborg ka 1! Iona hears
Sledg

Iona starts, and thr ough his snow plattered
eyelashes sees an of ficer in a military overcoat,
with a hood o v e r h ad

To Vyborg kava, repeat the officer Are
you sleep? T Vyborgskaya

In token of assent I na g es a tu at the reins
which sends creaks of sn w fly g from the horse's
back and sh ull r The of ficer g ts into the
ledge The sled dri er clicks t the horse
cranes his neck lik a sw n rises in his seat and
more from habit than necessity brandishes his
whip Th mare cranes h neck too crooks her
stack like legs and best t gly se s off

Wh r ar you shoin you de ul? Iona
immediat l hear h t s f m th dark mass
shift ng to a d f bel him Wher the devil
are y u g in? Keep to the r right

You don't know h w t dri keep to the
n ht say the of ficer angrily

A coachman dri g carri e swears at him
a pedestria cros th oad and brushing the
horse's nose with his h older looks t him angrily
and shakes th snow off his slee Iona fidg ts
on th box as th gh h w e attu on thorns,
jerks his lbovs nd turn his yes bo t like one
possessed as th ough h did n t know whe e he
vas or why h was ther

What ascals they all ar says th off er
jocosely They are nply d th ur best to
run up against you or fall und th h rse's feet
Th y mu be d in t n p rpose

Iona looks at his fare and moves his lips
Apparently he means to say something but
nothing comes but a snuff

What ? enquires the officer

Iona gives a wry smile and straining his throat
brings out huskily My son er my son
died this week sir

H m ! What did he die of ?

Iona turns his whole body round to his fare and
says

Who can tell It must have been from
fever He lay three days in the hospital
and then he died God's will

Turn round you devil comes out of the
darkness Have you gone cracked you old dog ?
Look where you are going !

Drive on drive on says the officer

We shan't get there till to-morrow going on
like this Hurry up !

The sledge driver cranes his neck again rises
in his seat and with heavy grace swings his whip
Several times he looks round at the officer but the
latter keeps his eyes shut and is apparently disin-
clined to listen Putting his fare down at Vyborg

kaya Iona stops by a restaurant and a man sits
huddled up on the box Again the wet snow
paints him and his horse white One hour passes
and then another

Three young men two tall and thin one short
and hunchbacked come up railing at each other
and loudly stamping on the pavement with their
goloshes

Cabby to the Police Bridge the hunchback

cries in a cracked voice The three of us
twenty kopecks

I na tugs at the reins and clicks to his horse. Twenty kopecks is not a fair price, but he has no thoughts for that. Whether it is a rouble or whether it is five kopecks does not matter to him now so long as he has a fare. The three young men, showing each other and using bad language go up to the ledge and all three try to sit down at once. The question remains to be settled. Which are to sit down and which one is to stand? After a little altercation ill temper and abuse, they meet the conclusion that the lunch bucket must sit down because he is the shortest.

Well done, says the lunch bucket in his cracked voice settling himself down by sitting down on Iona's neck. Cut along. What a cap you've got my friend. You couldn't find a worse one in all Petersburg.

He—he—he—he laughs Iona. It's nothing to boast of.

Well then nothing to boast of, driest on. Are you going to drink this all the way? Eh? Shall I give you one on the neck?

My head aches, says one of the tall ones.

At the Dukmasov's yesterday Vaska and I drank four bottles of brandy between us.

I can't make out why you talk such stuff say the other tall one angrily. You lie like a brute.

Strike me dead for the truth.

It's about as true as that I use coughs.

He—he grins Iona. Merry gentlemen!

Tfoo! the devil take you! cries the hunchback indignantly. Will you get on you old plague or won't you? Is that the way to drive? Give her one with the whip. Hang it all! give it her well.

Iona feels behind his back the jolting person and quivering voice of the hunchback. He hears abuse addressed to him, he sees people, and the feeling of loneliness begins little by little to be less heavy on his heart. The hunchback swears at him till he chokes over some elaborately whimsical string of epithets and is overpowered by his cough. His tall companions begin talking of a certain Nadyezhda Petrovna. Iona looks round at them. Waiting till there is a brief pause he looks round once more and says

This week e my er son
died.

We shall all die says the hunchback with a sigh wiping his lips after coughing. Come drive on drive on. My friends I simply cannot stand crawling like this. When will he get us there?

Well you give him a little encouragement one in the neck!

Do you hear you old plague? I'll make you smart. If one stands on ceremony with fellows like you one may as well walk. Do you hear you old dragon? Or don't you care a hang what we say?

And Iona hears rather than feels a slap on the back of his neck.

He he he hughs Merry gentlemen
God give you health!

Cabman are you married? asks one of the tall ones

I? He h Me er ry gentlemen The only wife for m v i the d mp earth
He ho-l o Th gr e that is Here
my son dead and I am al: e Its a
strange th ng death has come in at the wror
doo Ins ead f coming f r me it went for
my son

And Iona turns d to t If th m how h s son died but t that part th h hback gives a faint s h ard n u ces th t thark God they ha e arrived at last After tak his twenty kopecks I n gares for a l r whil after th revellers, wh disappear int a d k ntry Again h is al n and a ain there i lence for him The misery wh h has be f brief space eased comes back a-ai a d t a l s heart m e cruelly than ever With a look f artv ty and suffering, Iona s eyes stray estlies ly amon th crowds mov n to and fr on both sides of the treet can h not find am those th sands someone who will listen to h m? But th cr wd flt by heedles f him and h s misery Hi misery is immense beyord all bounds If I na s heart were t burst ard h s m sery to f w out t would flood the wh l world t seems but yet it is r t seen It has f und h d m place n such an insignificant hell th t on wuld not ha e found t w th a card by daylight

I na sees a house port r w th a parcel and makes up his mrd to address h n

Wh t time will t be fr d? he asks

Going on for ten Why have you stopped
here? Drive on

Iona drives a few paces away bends himself double, and gives himself up to his misery. He feels it is no good to appeal to people. But before five minutes have passed he draws himself up shakes his head as though he feel a sharp pain and tugs at the reins. He can bear it no longer

Back to the yard! he thinks To the yard!

And his little mare, although she knew his thoughts falls to trotting. An hour and a half later Iona is sitting by a big dirty stove. On the stove on the floor and on the benches are people snoring. The air is full of smells and stuffiness. Iona looks at the sleeping figures scratches himself and regrets that he has come home so early.

I have not earned enough to pay for the oats even, he thinks. That's why I am so miserable. A man who knows how to do his work who has had enough to eat and whose horse has had enough to eat is always at ease.

In one of the corners a young cabman gets up clears his throat sleepily and makes for the water bucket.

Want a drink? Iona asks him.

Seems so.

May it do you good But my son is dead mate Do you hear? This week in the hospital It's a queer business.

Iona looks to see the effect produced by his

words but he sees nothing. The young man has covered his head and is already asleep. The old man coughs and scratches himself. Just as the young man had been thirsty for water he thirsts for speech. His son will soon have been dead a week and he has not really talked to any body yet. He wants to talk of it properly with deliberation. He wants to tell how his son as a knight he suffered that he said before he died, how he died. He wants to describe the funeral and how he went to the hospital to get his son's clothes. He still has his daughter Iniya in the country. And he wants to talk about her too. Yes he has plenty to talk about now. His listner ought to be glad and excited and lament. It would be even better to talk to women. Though they are silly creatures, they blubber at the first word.

Let go out and have a look at the mare. Iona thinks. There is always time for sleep. You'll have sleep enough no fear.

He puts on his coat and goes into the stables where his mare is standing. He thinks about oats about hay about the weather. He cannot think about his son when he is alone. To talk about him with someone is possible but to think of him and picture him is insufferable anguish.

Are you munching? Iona asks his mare seeing her shudder. Yes. There's much hay much way. Since we have not earned enough for oats we will eat hay. Yes. I have grown too old to drive. My son ought

to be driving not I He was a real cabman
 He ought to have lived

Iona is silent for a while and then he goes on

That's how it is old girl Kuzma
 Ionitch is gone He said good bye to me

 He went and died for no reason Now
 suppose you had a little colt and you were your
 mother to that little colt And all at once
 that same little colt went and died You'd
 be sorry wouldn't you?

The little mare munches listens and breathe-
 on her master's hand Iona is carried away and
 tell her all about it

CHAMPAGNE
A WAYFARER'S STORY

CHAMPAGNE

A WAYFARER'S STORY

IN the year in which my story begins I had a job at a little station on one of our south western railways. Whether I had a gay or a dull life at the station you can judge from the fact that for fifteen miles round there was not one human habitation not one woman not one decent tavern and in those days I was young strong hot headed, giddy and foolish. The only distraction I could possibly find was in the windows of the passenger trains and in the vile vodka which the Jews drugged with thorn apple. Sometimes there would be a glimpse of a woman's head at a carriage window and one would stand like a statue without breathing and stare at it until the train turned into an almost invisible speck or one would drink all one could of the loathsome vodka till one was stupefied and did not feel the passing of the long hours and days. Upon me a native of the north the steppe produced the effect of a deserted Tatar cemetery. In the summer the steppe with its solemn calm the monotonous chur of the grasshopper the transparent moonlight from which one could not hide, reduced me to listless melancholy and in the winter the irreproachable white-

ness of the teppe it could distance long nights and his wife's eyes pressed me like a heavy nightmare. There were several people living at the tatun man's, for I, a deaf and croful uselgraph clerk and the estate him. My assistant, a young man, however, in compliance used to go for the atmosphere of the town where he stayed for months at a time, leaving his duties to me together with the right of pocketing his salary. I had no children, no cake would have it might displease to come and see me, and I could only visit other officials on the line and that no oftener than once a month.

I remember my wife and I with the New Year. We sat together, each would lazily, and heard the deaf uselgraph clerk monotone of the typewriter on his apparatus in the next room. I had already drunk five glasses of drugged vodka and popping my heavy head on my fist thought of my overpowering bored me from which there was no escape while my wife sat beside me and did not take her eyes from him. She looked at me as a new creature, but a woman who has nothing to do but a handsome husband. She liked me in my dress, slightly, and not merely my good looks, my soul, but my sins, my ill-humour and boredom, and even my cruelty. When under her fury, I knew how to content my ill-humour, I tormented her with epigrams.

In spite of the boredom which was consuming me, we were preparing to see the New Year in with exceptional festiveness, and were sitting madly with some impatience. The first is,

we had in reserve two bottles of champagne the real thing with the label of Veuve Clicquot this treasure I had won the previous autumn in a bet with the station master of D when I was drinking with him at a christening. It sometimes happens during a lesson in mathematics when the very air is still with boredom a butterfly flutters into the class room the boys toss their heads and begin watching its flight with interest as though they saw before them not a butterfly but something new and strange in the same way ordinary champagne chancing to come into our dreary station roused us. We sat in silence looking alternately at the clock and at the bottles.

When the hands pointed to five minutes to twelve I slowly began uncorking a bottle. I don't know whether I was affected by the vodka or whether the bottle was wet but all I remember is that when the cork flew up to the ceiling with a bang my bottle slipped out of my hands and fell on the floor. Not more than a glass of the wine was spilt as I managed to catch the bottle and put my thumb over the foaming neck.

Well may the New Year bring you happiness I said filling two glasses. Drink.

My wife took her glass and fixed her frightened eyes on me. Her face was pale and wore a look of horror.

Did you drop the bottle? she asked.

Yes. But what of that?

It's unlucky she said putting down her glass and turning paler still. It's a bad omen. It

THE TALES OF TCHEHOV

means that the misfortune will happen to us this
 or

What silly thing you are! I sighed. You
 are a clever woman and yet you talk as much
 nonsense as an idiot. Drink.

God grant it is nonsense but something
 is sure to happen. You'll see.

She didn't even pick her glass. He moved away
 and sank into thought. I uttered a few tale
 terms about superstition drank half a
 bottle paced up and down and then went out of
 the room.

Outside there was the tall frosty night in all its
 cold inhospitable beauty. The moon and two
 white fluffy clouds beaded it hung just over the
 station, motionless as though glued to the spot
 and looked as though waiting for something. A
 faint transparent light came from them and
 touched the white earth softly as though afraid
 of wounding her modesty and hid up every
 thing — the snowdrifts, the embankment. It
 was still.

I walked along the railway embankment.

Silly woman! I thought looking at the sky
 paled with brilliant stars. Even if one admits
 that omens sometimes tell the truth what evil
 can happen to us? The misfortunes we have
 endured already and which are facing us now
 are so great that it is difficult to imagine anything
 worse. What further harm can you do a fish
 which has been caught and fried and served up
 with sauce?

A poplar covered with hoar frost looked in the

bluish darkness like a grunt rapt in a hroud
It looked at me sullenly and dejectedly as though
like me it realized its loneliness I stood alone
while looking at it

My youth is thrown away for nothing like a
useless cigarette end I went on musing My
parents died when I was a little child I was
expelled from the high school I was born of a noble
family but I have received neither education nor
breeding and I have no more knowledg than
the humblest mechanic I have no refuge no
relations no friends no work I like I am not
fitted for anything and in the prime of my powers
I am good for nothing but to be tuffed into this
little station I have known nothing but trouble
and failure all my life What can happen worse?

Red lights came into sight in the distance A
train was moving towards me The slumbering
steppe listened to the sound of it My thoughts
were so bitter that it seemed to me that I was
thinking aloud and that the moan of the tele-
graph wire and the rumble of the train were ex-
pressing my thoughts

What can happen worse? The loss of my
wife? I wondered Even that is not terrible
It's no good hiding it from my conscience I don't
love my wife I married her when I was only a
wretched boy now I am young and vigorous and
she has gone off and grown older and sillier stuffed
from her head to her heels with conventional
ideas What charm is there in her maudlin love
in her hollow chest in her lustreless eyes? I put
up with her but I don't love her What can

but I don't think I am capable of crime—I am not afraid of being hauled up for it

The two little clouds had moved away from the moon and stood at a little distance looking as though they were whispering about something which the moon must not know. A light breeze was racing across the steppe bringing the faint rumble of the retreating train.

My wife met me at the doorway. Her eyes were laughing gaily and her whole face was beaming with good humour.

There is news for you, she whispered. Make haste, go to your room and put on your new coat, we have a visitor.

What visitor?

Aunt Natalya Petrovna has just come by the train.

What Natalya Petrovna?

The wife of my uncle Semyon Fyodoritch. You don't know her. She is a very nice good woman.

Probably I frowned, for my wife looked grave and whispered rapidly.

Of course it is queer her having come, but don't be cross, Nikolay, and don't be hard on her. She is unhappy, you know. Uncle Semyon Fyodoritch really is ill-natured and tyrannical; it is difficult to live with him. She says she will only stay three days with us, only till she gets a letter from her brother.

My wife whispered a great deal more nonsense to me about her despotic uncle, about the weakness of mankind in general and of young wives in

particular about t' bein' on duty to give shelter to all. In great winners and so on. Unable to mak' head o' tail o' t' I p't on my new coat and went t' mak' acquaintance with my aunt.

A littl' woman with larg' black eyes was sittin' at th' tabl'. My table the gr'y walls, my rou' hly-mad sofa, everythin' to th' time-t' grain o' dust seemed t' ha' grown y'ung and m're cheerful in the presence of this new y'ung, beautiful and dissolute creature wh' h'd a most ubtl' perfume about h'r. A d' that our r'to was a lady of easy virtu'. I could see f'om her smile, from her scent fr'm th' peculiar w' in which she glanced and made play with her v'lashes f'om th' t'ne in which sh' talked with my wife—a respectable woman. Ther' was no need t' tell m' h' had run away from her husband, th' t' her husband was old and despotic, that sh' was good-natured and lively. I took t' all m' at th' first glance. I deed, t' is doubtful whether ther' is man n' all Europe who cannot spot at th' first glance a woman of a certain temperament.

I did not know I had uch a b' nephew said my aunt holding ut her hand to m' and smilin'.

And I did not kn' w' I had uch a p'tty aunt I answered.

Supper began over again. Th' cork flew w' th a ban' out of th' second bottle, and my aunt swallowed half a glassful at a gulp and when my wif' went out of the room for m'm't my aunt did not scruple to drain full glass. I was drunk both with th' win' and w' th the presence of a woman. Do you ever be th' song?

Ey black a p t h yes f ll f pas
 Ey b n g bright a d be. t f l
 How I lo y
 H w I sea y n

I don't remember what happened next. Anyone
 who wants to know how love begins may read
 novels and long stories. I will put it shortly and in
 the words of the same silly song

It I t
 Wh first I m t y

Everything went head over heel to the devil
 I remember a fearful frantic whirlwind which
 sent me flying round like a feather. It lasted a
 long while and swept from the face of the earth
 my wife and my aunt herself and my strength
 From the little station in the steppe it has flung
 me as you see into this dark street

Now tell me what further evil can happen to me?

AFTER THE THEATRE

AFTER THE THEATRE

NADYA ZELENIN had just come back with her mamma from the theatre where she had seen a performance of Evgeny Onyegin. As soon as she reached her own room she threw off her dress, let down her hair and in her petticoat and white dressing jacket hastily sat down to the table to write a letter like Tatiana's.

I love you she wrote but you do not love me do not love me!

She wrote it and lau ghed.

She was only sixteen and did not yet love anyone. She knew that a officer called Gorny and a student called Gru dev loved her but now after the opera she wanted to be doubtful of the love. To be unloved and unhappy—how interesting that was! There is something beautiful touching and poetical about it when one loves and the other is indifferent. Onyegin was interesting because he was not in love at all and Tatiana was fascinating because she was so much in love but if they had been equally in love with each other and had been happy they would perhaps have seemed dull.

Leave off declaring that you love me Nadya went on writing thinking of Gorny I cannot

believe it. You're very clever, cultivated, serious, you have immense talent and perhaps a brilliant future. But you said I am an unintelligent girl of no importance and you know very well that I should be only hindrance in your life. It is true that you were attracted by me and thought you had found your ideal name, but that was a mistake and now you are asking yourself in despair. Why did I meet that girl? And only by your goodness of heart prevent you from committing it to your self.

Nadya felt sorry for herself. She began to cry and went on.

It is hard for me to let my mother and mother-in-law go. I should take a nun's veil and go. Further chance may lead me. And you would be left alone and would live. Oh, if I were dead.

She could not make out what she had written through her tears. Little rainbows were quivering on the table in the flicker of the ceiling as though she were looking through a prism. She could not write. — She sank back in her easy-chair and fell to thinking of Gorn.

My God! how intelligent, how fascinating men were. Nadya recalled the fine expression, moderation, guile, and soft which came into the 'fencer's' face when one argued about music with him and the effort he made to prevent his face from betraying his passion. In a society where cold heartedness and indifference are regarded as signs of good breeding and gentlemanly bearing, one must conceal one's passions. And he did try

to conceal them but he did not succeed and every one knew very well that he had a passionate love of music. The endless discussions about music and the bold criticisms of people who knew nothing about it kept him always on the strain. He was frightened, timid and silent. He played the piano magnificently like a professional pianist and if he had not been in the army he would certainly have been a famous musician.

The tears on her eyes dried. Nadya remembered that Gorny had declared his love at a Symphony concert and again down stairs by the hatstand where there was a tremendous draught blowing in all directions.

I am very glad that you have at last made the acquaintance of Gruzdev, our student friend. She went on writing. He is a very clever man and you will be sure to like him. He came to see us yesterday and stayed till two o'clock. We were all delighted with him and I regretted that you had not come. He said a great deal that was remarkable.

Nadya laid her arms on the table and leaned her head on them and her hair covered the letter. She recalled that the student too loved her and that he had as much right to a letter from her as Gorny. Wouldn't it be better after all to write to Gruzdev? There was a stir of joy in her bosom for no reason. Hate! At first the joy was small and rolled in her bosom like an indurated rubber ball then it became more massive bigger and rushed like a wave. Nadya forgot Gorny and Gruzdev her thoughts were in a tangle and her joy grew and

grasped her bosom it pressed into her arms and legs and it seemed as though a light cool breeze were blowing on her head and ruffling her hair. Her shoulders quivered with subdued laughter the table and the lamp chimney shook too and tears from her eyes played on the letter. She could not stop laughing and to prove to herself that she was not laughing about anything she made haste to think of something funny.

What a funny poodle! I am feeling as though he would chuck with laughter. What funny poodle.

She thought hastily that thing before Gruzdev had played with Vlastin the poodle and afterward told them about a very intelligent poodle who had run after a cat in the yard and the crow had looked at him and said:

Oh you scamp!

The poodle not knowing what to do with a learned crow was fearfully confused and treated in perplexity then began barking.

No I had better tell Gruzdev. Nadya decided and without further delay told Gorny.

She fell to thinking of the incident of his love of her love but then thought that in her head insisted on flowing in all direction and she thought about everything—about her mother about the street about the pen about the piano. She thought of them joyfully and felt that everything was good splendid and being joy told her that this was not all that in a little while it would be better still. Soon it would be spring summer going with her mother to Gorky. Gorky would come for

his furlough would walk about the garden with her and make love to her Grurdev would come too He would play croquet and skittles with her and would tell her wonderful things She had a passionate longing for the garden the darkness the pure sky the stars Again her shoulders shook with laughter and it seemed to her that there was a scent of wormwood in the room and that a twisp was tapping at the window

She went to her bed sat down and not knowing what to do with the immense joy which filled her with yearning she looked at the holy image hanging at the back of her bed and said

Oh Lord God Oh Lord God!

A LADY'S STORY

A LADY'S STORY

NINE years ago Pyotr Sergeyitch the deputy prosecutor and I were riding toward the train in hrimakin's time to fetch the letters from the station.

The weather was magnificent but on our way back we heard a peal of thunder and saw an angry black storm cloud which was coming straight towards us. The storm cloud was approaching us and we were approaching it.

Against the background of it our house and church looked white and the tall poplars shone like silver. There was a scent of rain and mown hay. My companion was in high spirits. He kept laughing and talking all sorts of nonsense. He said it would be nice if we could suddenly come upon a medieval castle with turreted towers with moss on it and owls in which we could take shelter from the rain and in the end be killed by a thunder bolt.

Then the first wave raced through the rye and a field of oats there was a gust of wind and the dust flew round and round in the air. Pyotr Sergeyitch laughed and spurred on his horse.

It's fine! he cried. It's splendid!

Infected by his gaiety I too began laughing at

that I love you Be silent do not answer me take no notice of it but only know that you are dear to me and let me look at you

His rapture affected me too I looked at his enthusiastic face listened to his voice which mingled with the pitter of the rain and stood as though spell bound unable to stir

I longed to go on endlessly looking at his shining eyes and listening

You say nothing and that is splendid said Pyotr Sergeyitch Go on being silent

I felt happy I laughed with delight and ran through the drenching rain to the house he laughed too and leaping as he went ran after me

Both drenched panting noisily clattering up the stairs like children we dashed into the room My father and brother who were not used to seeing me laughing and lighthearted looked at me in surprise and began laughing too

The storm clouds had passed over and the thunder had ceased but the raindrops still glittered on Pyotr Sergeyitch's beard The whole evening till supper time he was singing whilst playing noisily with the dog and racing about the room after it so that he nearly upset the servant with the samovar And at supper he ate a great deal talked nonsense and maintained that when one eats fresh cucumbers in winter there is the fragrance of spring in one's mouth

When I went to bed I lighted a candle and threw my window wide open and an undefined feeling took possession of my soul I remembered that I was free and healthy that I had rank and

we th it il I o ed above all that I had rank and wealth r k n l alth my God! how na th t w Th n I uddling up la bed at a t h f c l l w i h reached m from the garden with il ew I tried t disco er w ther I l i l P r Sergy v i h r n t and f l l p u a b l t r f c r l u s o n

And when in th m ing f saw quivering pat s f ur l t a l l t h d w s of the l i r e t r e e s n my bed w t t l a d I p r e n e d y e s t e r d a y u s e l l y i n m y m i n d L i s e e m e d o m e e t a r r e d f l l f c h a r m H u m m i n g I d r e s s e d q u i c k l y a n d w e n t o u t i n t h g a r d e n

A n d h t h p p e n e d a f t e r w a r d s / W h y — n o t h i g l t h e w a r r e n w h e d i n t o r n P y o t S e g e y t h a m t o s e e u f r m t u n t o t u n C o u t r y a c q a t n e e s a r l a r m i n g o n l y i n t h c o u n t r y i n d s u m m e r i n t h t o w n a n d i n w i n t e r t h e y l o s t t h e c h a r m W h e n y o u p o u r o u t t e a f o r t h e m i n t h t w n s e e m s t h h t h e y a r e w e a r i n g o t h e r p e o p l s c o t a n d a s t h o g h t h e y s t u r e d t h e i r t e a t o o l n g I n t h t w n t o o P y o t S e r g e y c h p o k e s o m t i m e s o f l b u t t h e e f f e c t w a s t a t a l l t h e s a m e a i n t h c o u n t r y I t h t o w n w e w e r e m o r e i n t e l l y c o n s c i o u s f t h e w a l l t h t t o o d b e t w e e n u s I h a d r a n k a n d w e a l t h w h i l e h w a s p o o r a n d h e w a s n t e n a n o b l e m a n b t o n l y t h e s o n o f d e a c o n a n d a d e p u t y p b l i c p r o s e c u t o r w b o t h f u s — I t h o u g h m y y o u t h a n d h e f o s o m u k n o w n r e a s o n — t h o u g h t o f t h a t w a l l a s v e r y h g h a n d t h e c k a n d w h e n h e w w i t h u s i n t h t o w n h w o u l d c r i t i c i z a n t o c r a t s o c i e t y w t h a f r e e d s m i l a n d m a i n t a i n a

sullen silence when there was anyone else in the drawing room. There is no wall that cannot be broken through but the heroes of the modern romance so far as I know them are too stupid spiritless lazy and oversensitive and are too ready to resign themselves to the thought that they are doomed to failure that personal life has disappointed them instead of struggling they merely criticize calling the world vulgar and forgetting that their criticism passes little by little into vulgarity.

I was loved happiness was not far away and seemed to be almost touching me. I went on living in care less ease without trying to understand myself not knowing what I expected or what I wanted from life and time went on and on.

People passed by me with their love bright days and warm nights flushed by the nightingales singing the hay melt fragrant and all this sweet and overwhelming in remembrance passed with me as with everyone rapidly leaving no trace was not prized and vanished like mist.

Where is it all?

My father is dead I have grown older every thing that delighted me caressed me gave me hope—the patter of the rain the rolling of the thunder thoughts of happiness talk of love—all that has become nothing but a memory and I see before me a flat desert distance on the plain not one living soul and out there on the horizon it is dark and terrible.

A ring at the bell. It is Pyotr Sergeyitch. When in the winter I see the trees and remember

How green they are for me in the summer
I per

O! my dear

And when I see people with whom I spent my
youth I feel sorrowful and warm and whatever
the same thing

It has long gone by my father's good offices been
transferred to town. He looks a little older a little
fallen away. He has long gone up declaring his
love has left off talking nonsense dislikes his
official work is ill in command and illu-
minated he has given up trying to get a living out of life
and takes no interest in living. Now he has sat
down by the hearth and looks in at the
fire

Not knowing how to say I ask him

Well what have you to tell me?

A thing he answers

And since again. The red glow of the fire
plays about him. I have

I thought of the past a tall ton on my shoulders
be an quieting my head dropped and I began
weeping bitterly. I felt unbearable sorry for my
self and for those men and passionately longed for
what had passed away and what I refused us
now. And now I did not think about rank and
wealth

I began to sob pressing my temples
and muttered

My God my God my life I tell

And he sat and was silent and did not say to
me. Don't weep. He understood that I must
weep and that that time I had come

I saw from his eyes that he was sorry for me and I was sorry for him too and vexed with this timid unsuccessful man who could not make a life for me nor for himself

When I saw him to the door he was I fancied purposely a long while putting on his coat Twice he kissed my hand without a word and looked a long while into my tear stained face I believe at that moment he recalled the storm the streak of rain our laughter my face that day he longed to say something to me and he would have been glad to say it but he said nothing He merely shook his head and pressed my hand God help him!

After seeing him out I went back to my study and again sat on the carpet before the fireplace the red embers were covered with ash and began to grow dim The frost tapped still more angrily at the windows and the wind droned in the chimney

The maid came in and thinking I was asleep called my name

IN FILE

IN FAIR

OLD SEMYON nicknamed Canny and a young Tatar whom no one knew by name were sitting on the river bank by the camp fire the other three ferrymen were in the hut Semyon an old man of sixty lean and toothless but broad shouldered and still healthy looking was drunk he would have gone in to sleep long before but he had a bottle in his pocket and he was afraid that the fellows in the hut would ask him for vodka The Tatar was ill and weary and wrapping himself up in his rags was describing how nice it was in the Simbirsk province and what a beautiful and clever wife he had left behind at home He was not more than twenty five and now by the light of the camp fire with his pale and sick mournful face he looked like a boy

To be sure it is not paradise here said Canny

You can see for yourself if the water the bare banks clay and nothing else Easter has long passed and yet there is ice on the river and this morning there was snow

It's bad! it's bad said the Tatar and looked round him in terror

The dark cold river was flowing ten paces away it grumbled lapped against the hollow clay bank

and raced on swiftly towards the far away sea. Close to the bank there was the dark blur of a big barge which the fishermen called a karbos. Far was the further bank lights dying down and the town up a sun engorged like little snakes they were burning last year grain. And beyond the little snakes there was darkness again. There the waves could be heard knocking against the barge. It was damp and cold.

The Tatar glanced at the sky. There were as many stars as there were and the same blackness all round but something was lacking. At home in the Simbirsk province the stars were quite different and so was the air.

It had its bad but repeated.

You will get used to it said Nemovon and he had heard. Now you are young and foolish the milk is hard to dry on your lips and it seems to you in your foolishness that you are more wretched than an animal but the time will come when you will say to yourself I wish no one a better life than mine. You look at me. Within a week the floods will be over and we shall set up the ferry you will all go wandering in about Siberia while I shall stay and shall begin going from bank to bank. I've been going like that for twenty-two years day and night. The pick and the salmon are under the water while I am on the water. And thank God for it. I want nothing. God give every man such a life.

The Tatar threw some dry twig on the campfire lay down close to the blaze and said

"My father is a sea man. When he dies my

mother and wife will come here They have promised

And what do you want your wife and mother for? asked Canny That's mere foolishness my lad It's the devil confounding you damn his soul! Don't you listen to him the cursed one Don't let him have his way He is at you about the women but you spite him say I don't want them! He is on at you about freedom but you stand up to him and say I don't want it! I want nothing neither father nor mother nor wife nor freedom nor post nor paddock I want nothing damn their souls!

Semyon took a pull at the bottle and went on

I am not a simple peasant not of the working class but the son of a deacon and when I was free I lived at Kursk I used to wear a frock coat and now I have brought myself to such a pass that I can sleep naked on the ground and eat grass And I wish no one a better life I want nothing and I am afraid of nobody and the way I look at it is that there is nobody richer and freer than I am When they sent me here from Russia from the first day I stuck it out I want nothing The devil was at me about my wife and about my home and about freedom but I told him I want nothing I stuck to it and here you see I live well and I don't complain and if anyone gives way to the devil and listens to him if but once he is lost there is no salvation for him he is sunk in the bog to the crown of his head and will never get out

It is not only a foolish peasant like you but

even gentler & well educated people are lost
 fifteen years ago they sent a gentleman here from
 Kussa. He didn't share something with his
 brothers and had forged something in a will.
 They said he was a prince or a baron but maybe
 he was simply an officer—well knows? Well the
 gentleman arrived here and first thing he bought
 himself a house and lived in Mubortinskoe. I
 don't live by my own work says he in the
 sweat of my brow for I'm not a gentleman now
 says he but settler. Well says I God help
 you that's the right thing. If I was young man
 then buy and carry I used to mow himself
 and catch fish and ride sixty miles on horseback.
 Only this is what happened for in the very first
 year he took to ride to Gyrimoff the post he
 used to take on my ferry and I told Semjon
 how long it is since they sent me any money from
 home. You don't want money Vassily Ser-
 geitch says I. What use is it to you? You
 lost away the past and forgot it as though it had
 never been at all although it had been a dream
 and he got told now. Don't listen to the devil
 says I he will bring you to no good he'll drive
 you into a snare. Now you want money says I
 but I very little while you'll be getting some-
 thing else and then more and more. If you want
 to be happy says I the best thing not to want
 anything. I see. If says I if fate has
 wronged you and mercilessly it is good asking
 for her favour and bowing down to her but you
 despise her and laugh at her & she will laugh
 at you. That's what I said to him.

Two years later I ferried him across to this side and he was rubbing his hands and laughing

I am going to Gyrino to meet my wife says he
 She was sorry for me says he she has come
 She is good and kind And he was bristling
 with joy So a day later he came with his wife
 A beautiful young lady in a habit in her arms was
 a baby girl And lots of luggage of all sorts And
 my Vasily Sergeyitch was fussing round her he
 couldn't take his eyes off her and couldn't say
 enough in praise of her Yes brother Semyon
 even in Siberia people can live! Oh all right
 thinks he it will be a different tale presently
 And from that time forward he went almost every
 week to inquire whether money had not come
 from Russia He wanted a lot of money She
 is losing her youth and beauty here in Siberia for
 my sake says he and sharing my bitter lot with
 me and so fought says he to provide her with
 every comfort

Tomak's livelier for the lady he made acquaintance
 with the officials and all sorts of riff raff And
 of course he had to give food and drink to all that
 crew and there had to be a piano and a shaggy
 lapdog on the sofa—plague take it Livory
 in fact self-indulgence The lady did not stay
 with him long How could she? The clay the
 water the cold no vegetables for you no fruit
 All around you ignorant and drunken people and
 no sort of manners and she was a spoiled lady from
 Petersburg or Moscow To be sure she moped
 Besides her husband and say what you like was not a
 gentleman now but a settler—not the same rank

Three ear later I remember on the eve of the Autumn there was snowing from the further bank. I went over with the ferry and what do I see but the lady all wrapped up and with her a young gentleman an official. Aided with three horses. I ferried them across here then going in and was like the wind. They were very late to start. And towards morning Vasyl Serenitch galloped down to the ferry.

Didn't my wife come this way with a gentleman in spectacles and a horse and I you may look for the wind in the fields. He galloped in pursuit of them. For five days and nights he was riding after them. When I ferried him over to the other side afterward he flung himself on the ferry and beat his head on the boards of the ferry and howled. So that how it is say I laughed and reminded him people can live even in Siberia. And he beat his head harder than ever.

Then he began to long for freedom. His wife had married off to Russia, and of course he was drawn there to see her and to get her was from her lover. And he took my lad to galloping almost every day either to the post or to the town to see the commanding officer. He kept sending in petitions for them to have mercy on him and let him go back home and he used to say that he had spent some two hundred roubles on telegrams alone. He sold his land and mortgaged his house to the Jews. He grew grey and bent and yellow in the face as though he was in consumption. If he talked to you he would go khee—khee—khee.

and there were tears in his eyes. He kept rushing about like this with petitions for eight years but now he has grown lighter and more cheerful again. He has found another victim to give way to. You see his daughter has grown up. He looks at her and she is the apple of his eye. And to tell the truth she is all right, good looking with black eyebrows and a lively disposition. Every Sunday he used to ride with her to church in Gyrrino. They used to stand on the ferry side by side, she would laugh and he could not take his eyes off her. Yes, Semjon says he people can live even in Siberia. Even in Siberia there is happiness. Look, says he, what a daughter I have got! I warrant you wouldn't find another like her for a thousand versts round. Your daughter's all right, says I, that's true certainly. But to myself I thought, Wait a bit, the wench is young, her blood's dancing, she wants to live and there's no life here. And she did begin to pin my lad. She faded and faded and now she can hardly crawl about. Corruption.

So you see what Siberian happiness is, damn its soul. You see how people can live in Siberia.

He has taken to going from one doctor to another and taking them home with him. As soon as he hears that two or three hundred miles away there is a doctor or a sorcerer he will drive to fetch him. A terrible lot of money he has spent on doctors and to my thinking he had better have spent the money on drink. She'll die just the same. She is certain to die and then it will

be all o'er with him. He'll han himself from
gri f r run away t Russia—that s a sur thin
He'll run away and they'll catch him then he
will be tried nt to prison h will have a taste of
the lash

Good good said the T tar shivering with
cold

What s good? asked Canny

His fe his dau hter What of prison
and what of sorr —any as h did see his wif
and his da ght r Y u say ant nothin
But nothin is b d His fe b ed with him
three years—th t was a gift fr m God Nothin
i bad but three years is good How not under
stand?

Shr ern and heat ing with effort picking
out th Russian w rds of h ch h kn w but
few th T tar said that God forbid on should
fall sick and di in strange l nd and be buried
n th cold and dark earth that if his f cam
to him f r one d y v n f r on h ur th t f r
uch happiness h w uld be ready to bear any
suffering and t thank God Better one day of
b p pness than nothin.

Then h described again wh t a beautiful and
clever wif h had l ft at hom Then clutching
his head in both hands h be an cryin and
assuring Semy n th t h was n t guilty and was
suffering so n thing His two b others and an
uncle h d carried off a peasant s horses and had
beaten the old man t'll h w half dead and th
commun had n t judgd fairly but had contr ved
a sentence by which all th th ee b others w re

sent to Siberia while the uncle a rich man was left at home

You will get used to it said Semyon

The Tatar was silent and stared with tear stained eyes at the fire his face expressed bewilderment and fear as though he still did not understand why he was here in the darkness and the wet beside strangers and not in the Simbirsk province

Canny lay near the fire chuckled at something and began humming a song in an undertone

What joy has she with her father? he said a little later He loves her and he rejoices in her that's true but mate you must mind your ps and qs with him he is a strict old man a harsh old man And young venches don't want strictness They want petting and ha-lala and ho-ho-ho and scent and pom-de Yes Ech life life sighed Semyon and he got up leisurely The vodka is all gone so it is time to sleep Eh? I am going my lad

Left alone the Tatar put on more twigs lay down and stared at the fire he began thinking of his own village and of his wife If his wife could only come for a month for a day and then if she liked she might go back again Better a month or even a day than nothing But if his wife kept her promise and came what could he have to feed her on? Where could she live here?

If there were not something to eat how could she live? the Tatar asked aloud

He was paid only ten kopeks for working all day and all night at the oar that is to say that travellers gave him tips for tea and for vodka but the men

shared all they received among themselves and gave nothing to the Tatar but only laughed at him. And from poverty he was hungry, cold and frightened.

Now when his whole body was aching and his crying he ought to go into the hut and lie down to sleep but he had nothing to cover him there and it was cold & there on the river bank here he had nothing to cover him there but at least he could make up the fire.

In another week when the floods were quite over and they set the ferry going none of the ferrymen but Semyon would be wanted and the Tatar would begin going from village to village begging for alms and for work. His wife was only seventeen she was beautiful, spoiled and shy could she possibly go from village to village begging alms with her face unveiled? No it was terrible even to think of that.

It was already getting light the barge the bushes of willow on the water and the reeds could be clearly discerned and I could look down and there was the steep clay slope at the bottom of the hut touched with dingy brown tint and the huts of the village lay clustered higher up. The cocks were already crowing in the village.

The rusty red clay slope the barge the river the strange unkind people hunger and illness perhaps all that was not real. Most likely it was all a dream thought the Tatar. He felt that he was asleep and heard his wife snoring. Of course he was at home in the Simbursk province and he had only to call his wife by name for her to answer and in the next room was his mother

What terrible dreams there are though !
What are they for ? The Tatar smiled and opened
his eyes. What river was this the Volga ?

Snow was falling

Boat ! was shouted on the further side
Boat

The Tatar woke up and went to wake his mates
and row over to the other side. The ferrymen
came on to the river bank putting on their torn
sheepskins as they walked swearing with voices
husky from sleepiness and shivering from the cold.
On waking from their sleep the river from which
came a breath of piercing cold seemed to strike
them as revolting and horrible. They jumped
into the barge without hurrying themselves.

The Tatar and the three ferrymen took the long
broad bladed oars which in the darkness looked
like the claws of crabs. Semyon leaned his stomach
against the tiller. The shout on the other side still
continued and two shots were fired from a revolver
probably with the idea that the ferrymen were
asleep or had gone to the pot house in the village.

All right you have plenty of time said
Semyon in the tone of a man convinced that there
was no necessity in this world to hurry—that it
would lead to nothing anyway.

The heavy clumsy barge moved away from the
bank and floated between the willow bushes and
only the willows slowly moving back showed that
the barge was not standing still but moving. The
ferrymen swung the oars evenly in time. Semyon
lay with his stomach on the tiller and describing
a semicircle in the air flew from one side to the

other. In the darkness it looked as though the men were sitting on some antediluvian animal with long paws and were moving on it through a cold desolate land the land of which one sometimes dreams in nightmares.

They passed by the willows and floated out into the open. The break and regular splash of the oars was heard on the further shore and a shout came. Make haste make haste.

Another ten minutes passed and the barge banged heavily against the landing stage.

And it keeps prinkling and sprinkling muttered Semyon wiping the snow from his face and wher it'll come from God only knows.

On the bank stood a thin man of medium height in a jacket lined with fox fur and in a white lamb-skin cap. He was standing at a little distance from his horses and, not moving, he had a gloomy concentrated expression as though he were trying to remember something and angry with his untrustworthy memory. When Semyon went up to him and took off his cap smiling he said:

I am hastening to Anastasye Ika. My daughter would see gain and they say that there is a new doctor at Anastasye Ika.

They dragged the carriage on to the barge and floated back. The man whom Semyon addressed as Vassily Sergeyitch stood all the time motionless tightly compressing his thick lips and taring off

to pacify him when his coachman asked permission to smoke in his presence. He made no answer as though he hadn't heard. Semyon lying on his stomach with his tiller looked mockingly at him and said:

Even in Siberia people can live—can live!

There was a triumphant expression on Canny's face as though he had proved something and was delighted that things had happened as he had foretold. The unhappy helplessness of the man in the foxskin coat evidently afforded him great pleasure.

It's muddy driving now. Vassily Sergevitch he said when the horses were harnessed again on the bank. You should have put off going for another fortnight when it will be drier. Or else not have gone at all. If any good would come of your going—but as you know yourself people have been driving about for years and year day and night and it's always been no use. That's the truth.

Vassily Sergevitch tapped him without a word got into his carriage and drove off.

There he had galloped off for a doctor said Semyon shrinking from the cold. But looking for a good doctor is like chasing the wind in the fields or catching the devil by the tail. plagues take your soul. What a queer clump. Lord forgive me a sinner.

The Tatar went up to Canny and looking at him with hatred and repulsion shivering and mixing Tatar words with his broken Russian said

He is good good but you are bad. You are bad! The gentleman is a good soul excellent and you are a beast bad. The gentleman is alive but you are a dead carcase. God created man to be alive and to have joy and grief and sorrow but you want nothing so you are not alive you are stone. lay. A stone wants nothing and you

THE CATTLE DEALERS

THE CATTLE DEALERS

THE long good train has been standing for hour in the little station. The engine is as silent as though its fire had gone out: there is not a soul near the train or in the station yard.

A pale trail of light comes from one of the vans and glides over the rails of a siding. In that van two men are sitting on a outspread cape: one is an old man with a big grey beard wearing a sheepskin coat and a high lambskin hat: some hat like a busby: the other a bardless youth in a threadbare cloth-refer jacket and muddy high boots. They are the owners of the goods. The old man sits his legs stretched out before him, musing in silence: the young man half-reclines and softly strums on a cheap accordion. A lantern with a tallow candle in it is hanging on the wall near them.

The van is quite full. If one glances in through the dim light of the lantern of the first man at the yes receives an impression of something hapless monstrous and unmistakably alive: something very much like gigantic crabs which move their claws and feelers crowd together and noiselessly climb up the walls to the ceiling: but if one looks more closely horns and their shadows lean

light of the two engine lamps dazzles his eyes for an instant and makes the night even blacker to him he goes to the station

The platform and steps of the station are wet Here and there are white patches of freshly fallen melting snow In the station itself it is light and as hot as a steam bath There is a smell of paraffin Except for the signalling machine and a yellow seat on which a man wearing a guard's uniform is asleep there is no furniture in the place at all On the left are two wide-open doors Through one of them the telegraphic apparatus and a lamp with a green shade on it can be seen through the other a small room half of it taken up by a dark cupboard In this room the local guard and the engine driver are sitting on the window sill They are both feeling a cap with their fingers and disputing

That's not real beaver it's imitation says the engine-driver Real beaver is not like that Five roubles would be a high price for the whole cap if you care to know

You know a great deal about it says the head guard slyly offended Five roubles indeed! Here we will ask the merchant Mr Malahin he says addressing the old man what do you say is this imitation beaver or real?

Old Malahin takes the cap into his hand and with the air of a connoisseur pinches the fur blows on it sniffs at it and a contemptuous smile lights up his angry face

It must be imitation! he says gleefully Imitation it is

A disquiet fills the guard maintains that the cap is real but the engine-driver and Malahun to persuade him that it is not. In the middle of the argument the old man suddenly remembers the object of his coming.

Beauregard and cap are all very well but the train is standing still gentlemen he says Who is it we are waiting for? Let us start.

Let us the guard greets We will smoke another cigarette and go on But there is no need to be in a hurry We shall be delayed at the next station anyway.

Why hurry?

Oh well We are too much behind time If you are late at station you cannot help being delayed at the other stations to let the trains go the opposite way pass Whether we set off now or in the morning we shall be number fourteen We shall have to be number twenty three.

And how do you make that out?

Well there it is.

Malahun looks at the guard reflect and mutters mechanically as though to himself.

God be my judge I have reckoned it and have jotted it down in a little book we have wasted thirty four hours standing still on the journey. If you go on like this either the cattle will die, or they won't pay me two rubles for the meat when I do get there. It's not travel but rumination.

The guard raises his eyebrows and sighs with an air that seems to say All that is unhappily true. The engine-driver sits silent dreamily looking at

the cap. From their faces one can see that they have a secret thought in common which they do not utter not because they want to conceal it but because such thoughts are much better expressed by signs than by words. And the old man understands. He feels in his pocket takes out a ten rouble note and without preliminary words without any change in the tone of his voice or the expression of his face but with the confidence and directness with which probably only Russians give and take bribes he gives the guard the note. The latter takes it folds it in four and without undue haste puts it in his pocket. After that all three go out of the room and taking the sleeping guard on the way go on to the platform.

What weather! grumbles the head guard shrugging his shoulders. You can't see your hand before your face.

Yes it's vile weather.

From the window they can see the flaxen head of the telegraph clerk appear beside the green lamp and the telegraphic apparatus soon after another head bearded and wearing a red cap appears beside it—no doubt that of the station master. The station master bends down to the table reads something on a blue form rapidly passing his cigar up and down the lines. Malahin goes to his van.

The young man his companion is still half reclining and hardly audibly strumming on the accordion. He is little more than a boy with no trace of a moustache his full white face with its broad cheek bones is childishly dreamy his eyes

has a melancholy and tranquil look unlike that of a grumpy person but he is broad strong-beamed. Like the old man he does not stir nor shift his position as though he is not equal to moving his big body. It seems as though any movement he made would tear his clothes and he is so busy as to frighten both him and the cattle. From under his big fingers that clumsily pick out the stops and keys of the accordion comes a steady flow of the tinkling sound which blends into a simple monotone. Little tune he listens to it and is deeply occupied with his performance.

A bell rings but with such a filled note that it seems to ring far away. A hurried second bell soon follows then the dog and the guard's whistle. A minute passes in perfect silence. The van does not move a bit but vague sounds begin to come from beneath it like the crunch of snow under sledge-runners. The van begins to shake and the sound ceases. Silence reigns again. But now comes the link of buffers the violent shock makes them start and it were given a lurch forward and all the cattle fall against one another.

My you be ordered the same in the world to come grumbles the old man setting straight his cap which had slipped on the back of his head from the jolt. He'll maim all my cattle like this.

Yach gets up without a word and taking one of the fallen beasts by the hind legs it to get on its legs. The jolt followed by a

stillness again. The sounds of crunching snow come from under the van again and it seems as though the train had moved back a little.

There will be another jolt in a minute, says the old man. And the convulsive quiver does in fact run along the train, there is a crashing sound and the bullocks fall on one another again.

It's a job! says Yasha, listening. The train must be heavy. It seems it won't move.

It was not heavy before, but now it has suddenly got heavy. No, my lad, the guard has not gone, shares with him, I expect. Go and take him something, or he will be jolting us till morning.

Yasha takes a three rouble note from the old man and jumps out of the van. The dull thud of his heavy footstep resounds outside the van and gradually dies away. Stillness. In the next van a bullock utters a prolonged subdued moo as though it were singing.

Yasha comes back. A cold damp wind darts into the van.

Shut the door, Yasha, and I will go to bed, says the old man. Why burn a candle for nothing?

Yasha moves the new door, there is a sound of a whistle, the engine and the train set off.

It's cold, mutters the old man, stretching himself on the cape and laying his head on a bundle. It is very different at home! It's warm and clean and soft, and there is room to say your prayers, but here we are worse off than any pigs. It's four days and nights since I have taken off my boots.

Yashá, getting from the jolting of the train, opens the lantern and snuffs out the wick with his wet fingers. Then it flares up, hisses like a frying pan and goes out.

Yes, my old Malin goes on as he feels Yashá's downy head on him and the young man's huge back huddles against his own. It's cold. There's a draught from every crack. If your mother or your sister were to sleep here for one night they would be dead by morning. Then it is my lad, you wouldn't study and go to the high school like our brother, so you must take the cattle with your father. It's your own fault, you have only your life to blame. Your brothers are asleep in their beds, they are snug under their bedclothes but you're careless and lazy, you are in the same box as the cattle. Yes.

The old man's words are muffled by the noise of the train but finally he goes on muttering sighing and clearing his throat. The cold air in the railway car grows thicker and more stifling. The pungent odour of fresh dung and mouldy candle makes it so repulsive and acrid that it irritates Yashá's throat and chest as he falls asleep. He coughs and sneezes while the old man, being accustomed to it, breathes with his whole chest as though nothing were amiss, and merely clears his throat.

To judge from the swaying of the van and the rattling of the wheels the train is moving rapidly and unevenly. The engine breathes heavily, snorting out of steam with the pulsation of the train and altogether there is a medley of sounds. The

bullocks huddle together uneasily and knock their horns against the wall

When the old man wakes up the deep blue sky of early morning is peeping in at the cracks and at the little uncovered window. He feels unbearably cold especially in the back and the feet. The train is standing still. Yasha sleepy and morose is busy with the cattle.

The old man wakes up out of humour. Frowning and gloomy he clears his throat angrily and looks from under his brows at Yasha who supporting a bullock with his powerful shoulder and slightly lifting it is trying to disentangle its leg.

I told you last night that the cord were too long mutters the old man but no. It's not too long Dady. There's no making you do any thing you will have everyth'ng you own way. Blockhead!

He angrily moves the door open and the light rushes into the van. A passenger train is standing exactly opposite the door and behind it a red building with a roofed in platform— a big station with a refreshment bar. The roof and bridge of the trains the earth the sleepers all are covered with a thin coating of shifty freshly fallen snow. In the spaces between the arranges of the passenger train the passengers can be seen moving to and fro and a red haired red faced gendarme walking up and down a waiter in a frock coat and a snow white shirt front looking cold and sleepy and probably very much dissatisfied with his fate is running along the platform carrying a glass of tea and two rusks on a tray.

nothing all day but eat and drink and I'll be bound we forgot to put down what we spent. What a memory. Lord have mercy on us!

The old man recalls aloud the expenditure of the day before and writes down in a tattered notebook where and how much he had given to guards engine-drivers oilers.

Meanwhile the passenger train has long ago gone off and an engine runs backwards and forwards on the empty line apparently without any definite object but simply enjoying its freedom. The sun has risen and is playing on the snow. Bright drops are falling from the station roof and the tops of the vans.

Having finished his tea the old man lazily saunters from the van to the station. Here in the middle of the first class waiting room he sees the familiar figure of the guard standing beside the station master, a young man with a handsome beard in a magnificent rough woollen overcoat. The young man probably new to his position stands in the same place gracefully shifting from one foot to the other like a good racehorse looks from side to side salutes everyone that passes by smiles and screws up his eyes. He is red-cheeked sturdy and good-humoured his face is full of eagerness and is as fresh as though he had just fallen from the sky with the feathery snow. Seen Malhin the guard sighs guiltily and throws up his hands.

We can't go number fourteen he says.

We are very much behind time. Another train has gone with that number.

The on master rapidly looks through some forms in turn, turns to the little eyes upon Malah, and his face radiant with smiles and fresh expressions greets him on the morrow.

You are Mr Malah? You have the cattle? Eight loads? What is to be done now? You are a little dilligent, sixteen go in the right. What are we to do now?

The young man discreetly takes to him of the fur of Malah, comes with two park-keepers and himself from one foot to the other, explains affably and convincingly that the Chinese numbers have gone ahead, and that such and such are gone, and that he would take for Malah everything in his power. And finally, it is evident that he is ready to do anything, to please not only Malah, but the whole world—he is so happy, so pleased and so delighted. The old man listens, and though he can make absolutely nothing of the intricate system of numbers, the train he nods his head approvingly and he too put two fingers on the soft wool of the rough coat. He enjoys seeing and hearing the polite and gallant young man. To show goodwill on his side, also he takes out ten double notes and after momentary thought adds a couple of double notes to it and gives them to the station-master. The latter takes them, puts his finger to his cap and gracefully thrusts them into his pocket.

Well gentlemen can't we arrange this? he says, kindled by a new idea that has flashed on him. The troop train is late, as you see it is not here, so why shouldn't you go as

the troop train? And I will let the troop train go as twenty eight Fh?

If you like agrees the guard

Excellent! the station master says delighted

In that case there is no need for you to wait here you can set off at once I'll despatch you immediately Excellent

He salutes Malahin and runs off to his room reading forms as he goes The old man is very much pleased by the conversation that has just taken place he smiles and looks about the room as though looking for something else agreeable

Well have a drink though he says taking the guard's arm

It seems a little early for drinkin

No you must let me treat you to a glass in a friendly way

They both go to the refreshment bar After having a drink the guard spends a long time selecting something to eat

He is a very stout elderly man with a puffy and discoloured face His features are unpleasant flabby looking and he is as slow as people are who drink too much and sleep irregularly

And to you men it has a second glass says Malahin It's cold now it's no sin to drink Please take some so I can rely upon you Mr Guard that there will be no hindrance or unpleasantness for the rest of the journey For you know in moving cattle every hour is precious

That is a good deal better than the first glass
I should like to see you in a good train —
A good train

mechanically the old man takes two twenty kopeck pieces out of his pocket and gives them to the oiler. He takes them very calmly too and looking good as usual, at the old man enters into conversation.

You are going to sell your cattle I suppose
it's good business.

Malak in sighs and looking calmly at the oiler's black face tells him that trading in cattle used certainly to be profitable but now it has become a risky and losing business.

I have a mate here the oiler interrupts him.

You merchant gentlemen might make him a little present.

Malakur gives something to the mate too. The troop train goes quickly and the waits at the stations are comparatively short. The old man is pleased. The pleasant impression made by the young man in the rough overcoat has gone deep. The vodka he has drunk slightly lounds his brain. The weather is magnificent and everything seems to be going well. He talks without ceasing and at every stopping place runs to the refreshment bar. Feeling the need of a listen he takes with him first the guard and then the engine driver and does not simply drink but makes a long business of it with sundry remarks and clinking of glasses.

You have your job and we have ours he says with an amiable smile. May God prosper us and you need not our will but His be done.

The vodka gradually excites him and he is worked up to a great pitch of energy. He wants to bestir himself to fuss about to make enquiries

to talk in earnestly. At one minute he fumbles in his pocket for a dial and looks for some form. Then he thinks of something and cannot remember it. He takes out his pocket book and with no sort of business counts over his money. He bustles about sighs and groans clasps his hands. Lying out before him the letters and telegrams from the meat business in the city bills post office and telegraphic receipt forms and his notebook he sits at a table and insists on Yasha's listening.

And when he is tired of reading over forms and talking about prices he gets out of the stopping places and stands there where his cattle are does nothing but simply clasps his hands and exclaims in horror

Oh dear oh dear how they complain, one Holy Martyr Vlassy. Though they are bloated though they are beasts yet they want to eat and drink as men do. It's four days and night since they have drunk or eaten. Oh dear! oh dear!

Yasha follows him and does what he is told like an obedient son. He does not like the old man's frequent visits to the refreshment bar. Though he is afraid of his father he cannot refrain from marking him out.

So you have begun already! he says looking sternly at the old man. What are you rejoicing at? Is it your name-day or what?

Don't you dare to say anything further.

Finishing on!

When he has not time to follow him if the following the

other vans Yasha sits on the cape and strums on the accordion. Occasionally he gets out and walks lazily beside the train. He stands by the engine and turns a prolonged unmoving stare on the wheels or on the workmen tossing blocks of wood into the tender. The hot engine wheezes the falling block comes down with the mellow hearty thud of fresh wood. The engine driver and his assistant very phlegmatic and imperturbable persons perform incomprehensible movements and don't hurry themselves. After standing for a while by the engine Yasha saunters lazily to the station. Here he looks at the eatables in the refreshment bar reads aloud some quite uninteresting notice and goes back slowly to the cattle van. His face expresses neither boredom nor desire; apparently he does not care where he is—at home in the van or by the engine.

Towards evening the train stops near a big station. The lamps have only just been lighted along the line against the blue background in the fresh limpid air the lights are bright and pale like stars. They are only red and glowing under the station roof where it is already dark. All the lines are loaded up with carriages and it seems that if another train came in there would be no place for it. Yasha runs to the station for boiling water to make the evening tea. Well-dressed ladies and high school boys are walking on the platform. If one looks into the distance from the platform there are far away lights twinkling in the evening dusk on both sides of the station—that is the town. What town? Yasha does not care.

13- THE TALES OF TCHEHOV

to know. He sees only the dim lights and wretched building beyond the station. He hears the cabmen shout in a sharp cold wind on his face and imagines that the train is probably disagreeable, uncomfortable and dull.

While they are having tea when it is quite dark and a lantern is hanging on the wall as usual as on the previous evening, the train quivers from a slight shock and begins to move backward. After going a little way the passengers hear indistinct shouts, someone sets the table clinking near the buffers and shouts, "Ready." The train moves and goes forward. Ten minutes later it is drawn back again.

Getting out of the train Malahan does not recognize his train. His eight pairs of bullocks are standing in the same way with some of the wheels which were not a part of the train before. Two or three of these are loaded with rubbish and the others are empty. The guard running to and fro on the platform arranges the train. They go on calling and making no answer to his questions. They behave as though they were waiting for Malahan, they are in a hurry to get the train to their stop to finish as soon as possible and to break the warmth.

What number this asks Malahan.

Number eight.

And where is the troop train? Why have you taken me to the troop train?

Getting no answer the old man goes to the station. He looks first for the familiar figure of the head guard and not finding him goes to the station master. The station master is sitting at

a table in his own room turning over a bundle of forms. He is busy and affects not to see the newcomer. His appearance is impressive: a cropped black head, prominent ears, a long looked nose, a swarthy face, he has a forbidding and as it were offended expression. Malahin begins making his complaint at great length.

What? queries the station master. How is this? he leans against the back of his chair and goes on growing indignant. What is it? and why shouldn't you go by number eighteen? Speak more clearly. I don't understand. How is it? Do you want me to be everywhere at once?

He showers questions on him, and for no apparent reason grow sterner and sterner. Malahin is already feeling in his pocket for his pocket book, but in the end the station master aggrieved and indignant for some unknown reason jumps up from his seat and runs out of the room. Malahin shrugs his shoulders and goes out to look for some one else to speak to.

From boredom or from desire to put the finishing stroke to a busy day, or simply that a window with the inscription "Telegraph!" on it catches his eye, he goes to the window and expresses a desire to send off a telegram. Taking up a pen, he thinks for a moment and writes on a blue form:

Urgent. Traffic Manager. Eight vans of live stock. Delayed at every station. Kindly send an express number. Reply paid. Malahin.

Having sent off the telegram, he goes back to the station master's room. There he finds sitting on

looking for his father. He listens and is about to sit down on a chair but probably thinking of his weight goes and sits on the window sill.

They don't take any notice of that. Malahun goes on and charges me and my son the third class fare too forty-two roubles for going in the van with the bullocks. This is my son Yakov. I have two more at home but they have gone in for study. Well and apart from that it is my opinion that the railways have ruined the cattle trade. In old days when they drove them in herds it was better.

The old man's talk is lengthy and drawn out. After every sentence he looks at Yasha as though he would say: "See how I am talking to clever people."

Upon my word the inspector interrupts him.

No one is indignant, no one criticizes. And why? It is very simple. An abomination strikes the eye and arouses indignation only when it is exceptional when the established order is broken by it. Here where saving your presence it constitutes the long established programme and forms and enters into the basis of the order itself, where every sleeper on the line bears the trace of it and stinks of it, one too easily grows accustomed to it! Yes sir.

The second bell rings the gentleman in the queue overcoats himself. The inspector takes him by the arm and still talking with him gets off with him to the platform. After the third bell the station-master runs into his room and sits down at his table.

Malahin lays out before him forms postal and telegraph receipts accounts. He does not know himself definitely what he wants of the gendarme he wants to describe in the protocol not any separate episode but his whole journey with all his losses and conversations with station masters—to describe it lengthily and vindictively.

At the station of Z he says quite that the station master unlinked my vans from the troop train because he did not like my countenance.

And he wants the gendarme to be sure to mention his countenance. The latter listens wearily and goes on writing without hearing him to the end. He ends his protocol thus:

The above deposition I non-commissioned officer Tchered have written down in this protocol with a view to present it to the head of the Z section and have handed a copy thereof to Gavril Malahin.

The old man takes the copy adds it to the papers with which his side pocket is stuffed and much pleased goes back to his ban.

In the morning Malahin wakes up again in a bad humour but his wrath vents itself not on Yasla but the cattle.

The cattle are done for! he grumbles. They are done for. They are at the last gasp. God be my judge they will all die. Tfoo.

The bullocks who have had nothing to drink for many days tortured by thirst are licking the hoarfrost on the wall and when Malahin goes up to them they begin licking his collar fur jacket. From their clear tearful eyes it can be seen that they are

exhausted by thirst and the jolting of the train that they are hungry and miserable.

It is a nice job taking you by rail you wretched brutes mutters Malabin. I could wish you were dead to get it over. It makes me sick to look at you.

At midday the train stops at a big station where according to the railway there was drinking water provided for cattle.

Water is given to them and but the bullocks will not drink it the water is too old.

Two more days and nights pass and at last in the distance the black factory comes into sight. The journey is over. The train comes to a standstill before the main goods station. The bullocks lie down from the strain stagger and tumble as though they were walking on slippery ground.

Having got through the unloading and preliminary inspection Malabin and Yasha take up their quarters in a dirty little hut in the outskirts of the town in the square in which the cattle-market is held. The lodgings are filthy and their food is disgusting unlike what they ever have at home they keep to the harsh rain and a wretched steam hurdy gurdy which plays day and night in the restaurant under the old bridge.

The old man spends his time from morning till night going about looking for purchasers and Yasha sits for days in the hotel room or goes out into the street to look at the town. He sees the filthy

square heaped up with dung the signboards of restaurants the turreted walls of a monastery in the fog. Sometimes he runs across the street and looks into the grocer's shop admires the jars of cakes of different colours yawns and lazily saunters back to his room. The city does not interest him.

At last the bullocks are sold to a dealer. Malahin hires drovers. The cattle are divided into herds ten in each and driven to the other end of the town. The bullocks exhaust and go with drooping heads through the noisy streets and look indifferently at what they see for the first and last time in their lives. The tattered drovers walk after them their heads drooping too. They are bored.

Now and then some drover starts out of his brooding remembers that there are cattle in front of him entrusted to his charge and to show that he is doing his duty brings a stick down full swing on a bullock's back. The bullock staggers with the pain runs forward a dozen paces and looks back at him as though he were ashamed at being beaten before people.

After selling the bullocks and buying for his family presents such as they could perfectly well have bought at home Malahin and Yasha get ready for their journey back. Three hours before the train goes the old man who has already had a drop too much with the purchaser and so is fussy goes down with Yasha to the restaurant and sits down to drink tea. Like all provincials he cannot eat and drink alone he must have company as fussy and as fond of sedate conversation as himself.

pieces in all directions and says in a sing-song voice

Good bye good health to you God grant that all may be well with you I kas God if we are alive and well we shall come again in Lent Good bye Thank you God bless you!

Getting into the sled the old man spends a long time crossing himself in the direction in which the monastery walls make a patch of darkness in the fog Yasha sits beside him on the very edge of the seat with his legs hanging over the side His face as before shows no sign of emotion and expresses neither boredom nor desire He is not glad that he is going home nor sorry that he has not had time to see the sight of the city

Drive on

The cabman whips up the horse and turning round begins swearing at the heavy and cumbersome luggage

SORROW

SORROW

THE turner Grigory Petrov who had been known for years past as a splendid craft man and at the same time as the most senseless peasant in the Galtchinskoy district was taking his old woman to the hospital. He had to drive over twenty miles and it was an awful road. A government post driver could hardly have coped with it much less an incompetent shuigard like Grigory. A cutting cold wind was blowing straight in his face. Clouds of snowflakes were whirling round and round in all directions so that one could not tell whether the snow was falling from the sky or rising from the earth. The fields the telegraph posts and the forest could not be seen for the fog of snow. And when a particularly violent gust of wind swooped down on Grigory even the yoke above the horse's head could not be seen. The wretched little nag crawled slowly along. It took all its strength to drag its legs out of the snow and to tug with its head. The turner was in a hurry. He kept restlessly hopping up and down on the front seat and lashing the horse's back.

Don't cry Matryona he muttered
Have a little patience Please God we shall

reach the hospital and in a trice it will be the right
 thing for you. PavelITCH will give you
 some little drugs or tell them to bleed you or
 maybe the doctor will be pleased to rub you with
 some sort of spirit—it'll draw the out of your
 body. PavelITCH will do his best. He will
 shout and stamp about but he will do his best.

He is a nice good man, affable. God give him
 health. As soon as we get there he will dart out
 of his room and will begin calling me names.

He? Why so? he will cry. Why did you
 not come at the right time? I am not a doctor to be
 hanged about with you. You'd better go. Why
 did you not come this morning? Go away.
 Get out of my sight. Come again to-morrow.
 And I shall say to the Doctor PavelITCH
 your horse is too old. He'll tell you you
 don't get on.

The turner lashed his nose and with out looking
 at the old woman went on muttering to himself.

You honour! It's true as before God.
 He is the Cross for you. I set off almost before
 it was light. He would I be here in time if the
 Lord, the Father of God, is with me and
 has sent such a southwest wind? And look for
 yourself. Even a first-rate horse could not
 do it while mine—you can see for yours if—isn't
 a horse but a devil. And PavelITCH will
 frown and shout. We know you. You always
 find some excuse. Especially you, Gosh. I
 know you. I'll be bound you're estopped
 at half a dozen times. And I shall say to your
 honour! am I a criminal or a heathen? My lord

woman is giving up her soul to God she is dying and am I going to run from tavern to tavern What an idea upon my word! Plague take them the taverns! Then Pavel Ivanitch will order you to be taken into the hospital and I shall fall at his feet

Pavel Ivanitch Your honour we thank you most humbly I give us fool and anathemas don't be hard on us peasants! We deserve a good kicking while you graciously put yourself out and mess your feet in the snow And Pavel Ivanitch will give me a look as though he would like to hit me and will say You'd much better not be sipping vodka you fool but taking pity on your old woman instead of falling at my feet You want a thrashing You're right there—a thrashing Pavel Ivanitch strike me God But how can we help bowing down at your feet if you are our benefactor and a real father to us? Your honour I give you my word here's before God you may spit in my face if I deceive you as soon as my Matryona the same here is well again and restored to her natural condition I'll make anything for your honour that you would like to order! A cigarette-case if you like of the best birch wood balls for croquet skittles of the most foreign pattern I can turn I will make anything for you! I won't take a farthing from you In Moscow they would charge you four rubles for such a cigarette case but I won't take a farthing The doctor will laugh and say Oh all right all right I see! But it's a pity you are a drunkard I know how to manage the gentry old gentry! There isn't

a gentleman I couldn't talk to. O! God grant we don't get off the road. O! how it is blowing! On, my eyes are full of snow.

And the turner went on muttering endlessly. He persisted on mechanically to get a little relief from his depressing feeling. He had plenty of words on his tongue but the thoughts and questions in his brain were even more numerous. Sorrows had come upon the turner unawares, unlooked for and unexpected and now he could not get over it. He could not recover himself. He had lived hitherto in unconscious calm as though in drunken half-consciousness knowing neither grief nor joy and now he was suddenly aware of a dreadful pain in his heart. The careless idler and drunkard found himself quite suddenly in the position of a busy man who is vexed by anxieties and haste and even struggling with nature.

The turner remembered that his trouble had begun three days before. When he had come home yesterday evening a little drunk as usual and from long-expectation blushed but had begun wearing and making fists his old woman had looked at her rowdy pose as she had never looked at him before. Usually the expression in her good eyes was that of a martyr meek like that of a dog frequently beaten and badly fed. This time she had looked at him sternly and immovably as saints in the holy pictures or dying people look. From that strange evil look in her eyes the trouble had begun. The turner stupefied with amazement borrowed a horse from a neighbour and now was taking his old woman to the hospital in the hope that by means of

powders and ointments Pavel Ivanitch would bring back his old woman's habitual expression

I say Matryona the turner muttered if Pavel Ivanitch asks you whether I beat you say Never and I never will beat you again I swear it And did I ever beat you out of spite? I just beat you without thinking I am sorry for you Some men wouldn't trouble but here I am taking you I am doing my best And the way it snows the way it snows Thy Will be done O Lord God grant you don't get off the road Does your side ache Matryona that you don't speak? I ask you does your side ache?

It struck him as strange that the snow on his old woman's face was not melting it was queer that the face itself looked somehow drawn and had turned a pale greyish waxen hue and had grown grave and solemn

You are a fool muttered the turner

I tell you on my conscience before God and you go and Well you are a fool I have a good mind not to take you to Pavel Ivanitch

The turner let the reins go and began thinking He could not bring himself to look round at his old woman he was frightened He was afraid too of asking her a question and not getting an answer At last to make an end of uncertainty without looking round he felt his old woman's cold hand The lifted hand fell like a log

She is dead then What a business!

And the turner cried He wasn't so much sorry as annoyed He thought how quickly everything

passes in the world. His trouble had hardly begun when the final catastrophe had appeared. He had not had time to tell his old woman to slow her heels, sorry for her before she died. He had lived with her for forty years, but those forty years had passed by as it were in a fog. What with drunkenness, quarrelling, and poverty there had been no feeling of life. And as though to spite him, his old woman died at the very time when he felt he was sorry for her, that he could not live without her, and that he had behaved dreadfully badly to her.

Why she used to go the round of the village he remembered. It isn't her out myself to beg for bread. What a business! She ought to have lived another ten years, the silly thing, as it will be bound she thinks I really with that sort of nan.

Holy Mother! but what is the deal am I driving? There's no need for a driver now, but a hurrah! Turn back!

Grigory turned back and lashed the horse with all his might. The road grew worse and worse every hour. Now he couldn't see the yoke at all. Now and then the sledging animal lay on its back, a dark object scratched the turner's hand, and flashed before his eyes, and then the old fission was white and whirling again.

To lie over again, thought the turner.

He remembered that forty years ago Matryon had been young, handsome, many that he had come of a well-to-do family. They had married her to him because they had been interested by his handicraft. All the essentials for a happy life.

had been there but the trouble was that just as he had got drunk after the wedding, and lay sprawled on the stove so he had gone on without waking up till now. His wedding he remembered but of what happened after the wedding—for the life of him he could remember nothing except perhaps that he had drunk himself on the stove and quarrelled. Forty years had been wasted like that.

The white clouds of snow were becoming little by little to turn grey. It was getting dusk.

Where am I going? the turner suddenly bethought him with a start. I ought to be thinking of the burial and I am on the way to the hospital. It is as though I had gone crazy.

Grigory turned round again and again lashed his horse. The little nag strained its utmost and with a snort fell into a little trot. The turner lashed it on the back time after time. A knocking was audible behind him and though he did not look round he knew it was the dead woman's head knocking against the sled. And the snow kept turning darker and darker the wind grew colder and more cutting.

To live over again thought the turner. I should get a new lathe take orders give the money to my old woman.

And then he dropped the reins. He looked for them tried to pick them up but could not—his hands would not work.

It does not matter he thought the horse will go of itself it knows the way. I must have a little sleep now. Before the funeral or the requiem it will be as well to get a little rest.

The turner closed his eyes and dozed. A little later he heard the horse stop; he opened his eyes and saw before him something dark like a hut or a haystack.

He would have got out of the ledge and found out what it was but he felt overcome by such inertia that it seemed better to freeze than move and he sank into a peaceful sleep.

He woke up in a big room with painted walls. Bright sunlight was streaming in at the windows. The turner saw people facing him and his first feeling was a desire to know how many respectable men who knew how things should be done.

A requiem brothers of my old woman, he said. The priest should be told.

Oh all right all right I'd write a notice out for him, he said.

Pavel Ivanitch, the turner cried in surprise seeing the doctor before him. Your honour, benefactor.

He wanted to leap up and fall on his knees before the doctor but felt that his arms and legs would not obey him.

Your honour, where are my legs, where are my arms?

Good-by to your arms and legs. They've been frozen off. Come, come. What are you crying for? You lived your life and thank God for it. I suppose you have had sixty years of it—that's enough for you.

I am grieving. Graciously forgive me. If I could have another five or six years.

What for?

The horse isn't mine I must give it back
I must bury my old woman How quickly
it is all ended in this world ! Your honour I ave
Ivanitch ' A cigarette-case of birchwood of the
best ! I'll turn you croquet balls

The doctor went out of the ward with a wave of
his hand It was all over with the turner

ON OFFICIAL DUTY

ON OFFICIAL DUTY

THE deputy examining magistrate and the district doctor were going to an inquest in the village of Sytnya. On the road they were overtaken by a snowstorm; they spent a long time going round and round and arrived not at midday as they had intended but in the evening when it was dark. They put up for the night at the Zemstvo but it so happened that it was in this hut that the dead body was lying--the corpse of the Zemstvo insurance agent L. nutsky, who had arrived in Sytnya three days before and ordering the samovar in the hut had shot himself to the great surprise of everyone and the fact that he had ended his life so strangely after unpacking his eatables and laying them out on the table and with the samovar before him led many people to suspect that it was a case of murder; an inquest was necessary.

In the outer room the doctor and the examining magistrate shook the snow off themselves and knocked it off their boots. And meanwhile the old village constable Ilya Loshadin stood by holding a little tin lamp. There was a strong smell of paraffin.

Who are you? asked the doctor.

Constable answered the constable.

self he shoots himself in a village in a Zemstvo hut so as to give the maximum of trouble to everybody. These gentlemen in every circumstance of life think of no one but themselves! That's why the elderly so dislike our nervous age.

The elderly dislike so many things, said the examining magistrate yawning. You should point out to the elder generation what the difference is between the suicides of the past and the suicides of to-day. In the old days the so-called gentleman shot himself because he had made away with Government money but nowadays it is because he is sick of life depressed. Which is better?

Sick of life depressed but you must admit that he might have shot himself somewhere else.

Such trouble, said the constable, such trouble. It's a real affliction. The people are very much upset your honour, they haven't slept these three nights. The children are crying. The cows ought to be milked but the women won't go to the stall—they are afraid. For fear the gentleman should appear to them in the darkness. Of course they are silly women but some of the men are frightened too. As soon as it is dark they won't go by the hut on by one but only in a flock together. And the witnesses too.

Dr Startchenko, a middle-aged man in spectacles with a dark beard and the examining magistrate Iyzhan, a fair man still young who had only taken his degree two years before and looked more like a student than an official, sat in silence musing. They were vexed that they were late. Now they

had to wait till morning and to stay here for the night though it was not yet six o'clock and they had before them a long evening, a dark night boredom under comfortable beds, beetles and cold in the morning. Listening to the blizzard that howled in the chimney and in the loft they both thought how unlike all this was the life which they would have chosen for themselves and of which they had once dreamed and how far away they both were from their contemporaries who were at that moment walking about the lighted streets in town without noticing the weather or were getting ready for the theatre or sitting in their studies over a book. Oh how much they would have given not only to stroll along the Nevsky Prospect or along Petrovka in Moscow to listen to a decent singing to sit for an hour or so in a restaurant.

Oo-oo-oo-oo sang the storm in the loft and something outside slammed loudly probably the door on board in the hut. Oo-oo-oo-oo

You can do as you please but I have no desire to stay here, said Starichenko getting up. It is not six yet it is too early to go to bed. I am off. Von Tunitz lives not far from here only a couple of miles from Syrnaya. I shall go to see him and spend the evening there. Constable run and tell my coachman not to take the horses out. And what are you going to do? he asked Lyzhin.

I don't know. I expect I shall go to sleep.

The doctor wrapped himself in his fur coat and went out. Lyzhin could hear him talking to the coachman and the bells beginning to quaver on the frozen harness. He drove off.

It is not nice for you sir to spend the night in here said the constable come into the other room It's dirty but for one night it won't matter I'll get a samovar from a peasant and heat it directly I'll heap up some hay for you and then you go to sleep and God bless you your honour

A little later the examining magistrate was sitting in the kitchen drinking tea while Loshad' the constable was standing at the door talking He was an old man about sixty short and very thin bent and white with a naive smile on his face and watery eyes and he kept smacking with his lips as though he were sucking a sweetmeat He was wearing a short sheepskin coat and high felt boots and held his stick in his hands all the time The youth of the examining magistrate aroused his compassion and that was probably why he addressed him familiarly

The elder gave orders that he was to be informed when the police superintendent or the examining magistrate came he said so I suppose I must go too It's nearly three miles to the police and the storm the snowdrifts are so enormous so terrible—maybe one won't get there before midnight Ough how the wind roars

I don't need the elder said Lyzhin There is nothing for him to do here

He looked at the old man with curiosity and asked

Tell me grandfather how many years have you been constable?

How many? Why thirty years Twenty years

after the Freedom I began going as constable that's how I reckon it. And from that time I have been going every day now. Other people have holidays but I am always going. When it's Easter and the church bells are ringing and Christ has risen I still go about with my bag—to the treasury to the post to the police superintendent's lodgings to the rural captain to the tax inspector to the municipal office to the gentry to the peasants to all orthodox Christians. I carry parcels notes tax papers letters forms of different sort circulars and to be sure kind gentleman there are all sorts of forms nowadays so as to note down the numbers—yellow white and red—and every gentleman or priest or well-to-do peasant must write down a dozen times in the year how much he has sown and harvested how many quarters or poods he has of rye how many of oat how many of hay and what the weather's like you know and insect too of all sorts. To be sure you can write what you like it's only a regulation but one must go and get out the notes and then go again and collect them. Here for instance there's no need to cut open the gentleman you know yourself it's a silly thing it's only dirtying your hands and here you have been put to trouble your honour you have come because it's the regulation you can't help it. For thirty years I have been going and according to regulation. In the summer it is all right it is warm and dry but in winter and autumn it's uncomfortable. At times I have been almost drowned and almost frozen all sort of things have happened—wicked people set on me in the forest

and took away my bag I have been beaten and I have been before a court of law

What were you accused of?

Of fraud

How do you mean?

Why you see Hrisanf Gngoryev the clerk sold the contractor some boards belonging to some one else—cheated him in fact I was mixed up in it They sent me to the tavern for vodka well the clerk did not share with me—did not even offer me a glass but as through my poverty I was—in appearance I mean—not a man to be relied upon not a man of any worth we were both brought to trial he was sent to prison but praise God I was acquitted on all points They read a notice you know in the court And th y were all in uniforms—in the court I mean I can tell you your honour my duties for anyone not used to th m are terrible absolutely killing but to me it is nothing In fact my feet ache when I am not walking And at home it is worse for me At home one has to heat the stove for the clerk in the richest office to fetch water for him to clean his boots

And what wages do you get? Lyzhin asked

Eighty four roubles a year

I'll bet you get other little sums coming in y u do don't you?

Other little sums? No indeed! Gentlemen nowadays don't often give tips Gentlemen nowadays are strict th y take offence at any thing If you bring them a notice th y are offended if you take off your cap before th m they

ar offendd You have come to the wrong entrance th y say You are a drunkard they say You sm b of onion you are a blockhead you ar the son of a b tch Th re are kind hearted nes I c urse but what does one g t from them ? They only lau gh and call on all sorts of names Mr Altuhin fo instance he is a good natured gentleman and if you look at him h seems sober and u his right mind but so soon as he sees me he houts and does not know wh t he means himself H ga e me such a nam You said he The con t bl uttered som word but in such a l w o ce that t was imposs ble to mak out what h said

What ? Lyzhin sked Say it ain

Administration th constable repeated aloud H has been calling me th t for long whil f r th last a year Hull Adm nstrati n But I don t mind l t h m God bless him Sometimes a lady will s nd n a glass fodka and a bit f pr and one drinks to her h alth But peasants gi e mor peasant ar m kind hearted they hav the f ar of God n th ir hearts one w ll giv a b t of bre d n ther drop of cabbag soup an ther will stand n glass The vill e lders treat on to tea n th ta ern Here the w tnesses ha e gon t their tea Loshadin they said you t y her and keep watch for s and they ga m a kopeck each You see they are frightened not being used to t nd yesterday they gave m fifteen kopecks nd offered m a glass

And you aren t you fright n d ?

I am sir but of course it is my duty there is no getting away from it In the summer I was taking a convict to the town and he set upon me and gave me such a drubbin ! And all around were fields forest—how could I get away from him ? It's just the same here I remember the gentleman Mr Lesnitsky when he was so high and I knew his father and mother I am from the village of Nedoshtchotova and they the Lesnitsky family were not more than three quarters of a mile from us and less than that their ground next to ours and Mr Lesnitsky had a sister a God-fearing and tender hearted lady Lord keep the soul of Thy servant Yulya eternal memory to her She was never married and when she was dying she divided all her property she left three hundred acres to the monastery and six hundred to the commune of peasants of Nedoshtchotova to commemorate her soul but her brother hid the will they do say burnt it in the stove and took all this land for himself He thought to be sure it was for his benefit but—nay wait a bit you won't get on in the world through injustice brother The gentleman did not go to confession for twenty years after He kept away from the church to be sure and died impenitent He burst He was a very fat man so he burst lengthways Then everything was taken from the young master from Seryozha to pay the debts—everything there was Well he had not gone very far in his studies he couldn't do anything and the president of the Rural Board his uncle—I'll take him—Seryozha I mean—thinks he for an agent let him collect

the insurance that's not a difficult job and the gentleman was young and proud he wanted to be living on a big scale and in better style and with more freedom. To be sure it was a come-down for him to be jolting about the district in a wretched cart and talking to the peasants. He would walk and keep looking on the ground looking on the ground and saying nothing. If you called his name right in his ear Sergiy Sergeyitch he would look round like this. Eh? and look down on the ground again and now you see he has laid hands on himself. There's no use in it your honour it's not right and there's no making out what's the meaning of it merciful Lord. So your father was rich and you are poor. It's mortifying there's no doubt about that but there you must make up your mind to it. I used to live in good style too. I had two horses your honour three. I used to keep twenty head of sheep but the time has come and I am left with nothing but a retched bag and vest that's not to be but Government property. And now in our Vedshchik to a. If the truth is to be told my house is the worst in the lot. Maley had four footmen and now Maley is a footman himself. Petrak had four labourers and now Petrak is a labourer himself.

How was it you became poor? asked the taxman, magistrate.

My sons drink terribly. I could not tell you how they drink you wouldn't believe it.

Lyzhin listened and thought how he. Lyzhin would go back sooner or later to Moscow while this old man would stay here forever and would always

he walking and walking And how many times in his life he would come across such battered unkempt old men not men of any worth in whose souls fifteen kopecks glasses of vodka and a profound belief that you can't get on in this life by dishonesty were equally firmly rooted

Then he grew tired of listening and told the old man to bring him some hay for his bed There was an iron bedstead with a pillow and a quilt in the traveller's room and it could be fetched in but the dead man had been lying by it for nearly three days (and perhaps sitting on it just before his death) and it would be disagreeable to sleep upon it now

It's only half past seven thought Lyzhin glancing at his watch 'How a full it is!'

He was not sleepy but having nothing to do to pass away the time he lay down and covered himself with a rug Loshadin went in and out several times clearing away the tea things smacking his lips and sighing he kept tramping round the table at last he took his little lamp and went out and looking at his long grey-headed bent figure from behind Lyzhin thought

Just like a magician in an opera

It was dark The moon must have been behind the cloud as the windows and the snow on the window frames could be seen distinctly

Oo-oo oo oo sang the storm Oo oo-oo oo

Ho-ho-ly sa aints! wailed a woman in the loft or it sounded like it Ho-ho-ly sa aints!

Bl-blool sm thing out ide banged a'ga'nt
the wall Trah

Th x mining m gistrate listened there was no
woman p th r t was the wind blowing It was
rather cold and he put his fur coat o'er his rug
As i g t warm h thought how remote all this—
th torm and the hut and the oil man and the
d ad body lying in th next room—how remote
t all was fr m th ll he desired for himself and
how alien it all was to him how petty how un-
teresting If this man had killed himself in
Moscow or som' wher in th neighbourhood and
h had had to b ld an nquest on him there it
would ha been teresting important and per-
haps hught e n h v b'ca afraid t sleep in the
next room to the corpse Her nearly thou-
sand miles from Moscow all this was seen somehow
in a different light t was not life they were not
human beings but someth g nly existing accord-
ing to the regul ti n as Loshadin said t would
leav not th faintest trace n th memory and
would be forgotten as soon as he Lyzhin drove
away from Syrnaya The f th'rl ad th real
Russia, was Moscow P tersburg but here h was
in th provinces th col nies When n dreamed

f playin, a leading part of bec r'ng a popular
figure of being for instance exam n'm magis-
trat in particularly mport nt cases or prosecut-
in a circuit court of bein society l n on always
thought of Moscow To h on must be i
Moscow here on cared for n th g ne grew
easily resigned to one s insignificant pos t on and
only expected one thing of life—to get aw y

qui kly qui kly And Lyzhin mentally moved about the Moscow streets & went into the family houses met his kindred his comrades and there was a sweet pang at his heart at the thought that he was only twenty ix and that if in five or ten years he could break away from here and get to Moscow even then it would not be too late and he would still have a whole life before him And as he sank into unconsciousness as his thoughts began to be confused he imagined the long corridor of the court at Moscow himself delivering a speech his sisters the orchestra which for some reason kept droning

Oo oo-oo oo Oo oo oo oo !

Looh Trah sounded again Buh

And he suddenly recalled he & one day when he was talking to the book keeper in the little office of the Rural Board a thin pale gentleman with black hair and dark eyes walked in He had a disagreeable look in his eyes such as one sees in people who have slept too long after dinner and it spoiled his delicate intelligent profile and the high boots he was wearing did not suit him but it looked clumsy The book keeper had introduced him This is our insurance agent

So that was Lesnitsky this same man

Lyzhin reflected on

He recalled Lesnitsky's soft voice imagined his gait and it seemed to him that someone was walking beside him now with a step like Lesnitsky's

All at once he felt frightened his head turned cold

Who's the e? he asked in alarm

The constable!

What do you want here?

I have come to ask your honour—you said this evening that you did not want the elder but I must find him, may be angry. He told me to go to him. Shouldn't I go?

That is enough, you bother me, said Lyzhin with vexation, and he covered his self up again.

He may be angry. I'll go, your honour. I hope you will be comfortable, and Loshadin went out.

In the passage there was coughing and subdued voices. The witnesses must have turned.

Well, let these poor beggars get away early to-morrow. I thought the examining magistrate would begin the quest as soon as it is daylight.

He began sinking, as if tired, when suddenly there were steps behind him at this time but rapid and noisy. There was the sound of door voices, the scratching of feet.

As he was asleep, he fell asleep. Dr. Startelanko was asking him hurriedly and angrily as he stood in front of him after another who was covered with snow and brought him in with him. Are you asleep? Get up. Let us go to Von Tantz. He has his own horses for you. Come along. There, at any rate, you will have supper and sleep like Iuma. You see I have come for you myself. The horses are splendid, we shall get there in twenty minutes.

And what time is it now?

A quarter past ten.

Lyzhin, sleepy and discontented, put on his hat.

overboots his fur lined coat his cap and hood and went out with the doctor. There was not a very sharp frost but a violent and piercing wind was blowing and driving along the street the clouds of snow which seemed to be racing away in terror high drifts were heaped up already under the fences and at the doorways. The doctor and the examining magistrate got into the sledge and the white coachman bent over them to button up the cover. They were both hot.

Ready

They drove through the village. Cutting a feather furrow through the snow the examining magistrate listlessly watching the action of the trace-horse's legs. There were lights in all the huts as though it were the eve of a great holiday the peasants had not gone to bed because they were afraid of the dead body. The coachman preserved aullen silence probably he had felt dreary while he was waiting by the Zemstvo hut and now he too was thinking of the dead man.

At the Von Taunitz's said Startchenko they all set upon me when they heard that you were fit to spend the night in the hut and asked me why I did not bring you with me.

As they drove out of the village at the turning the coachman suddenly shouted at the top of his voice. Out of the way.

They caught a glimpse of a man he was standing up to his knees in the snow moving off the road and staring at the horses. The examining magistrate saw a stick with a crook and a beard and a ba and he fancied that it was Loshadin.

and even fancied that he was smiling. He flashed by and disappeared.

They did not at first enter the edge of the forest, then, finding a broad forest clearing, they caught glimpses of old pines and a young birch copse and tall gnarled young oak trees standing singly in the clearings. Here the wood had lately been cut, but soon it was all merged in the clouds of snow. The coachman said he could see the forest, the taximeter-man could see nothing but the trace-horse. The wind blew on their backs.

All at once the horses stopped.

Well, what is it now? asked Startchenko crossly.

The coachman got down from the box without a word and began running out, the sleds treading on his heels. He made larger and larger circles, getting further and further away from the sledge, and it looked as though he were dancing. At last he came back and began to turn off to the right.

You got off the road, he? asked Startchenko.

It's all right.

Then there was a little stillness and came a single lightening. Again the forest and the field. Again they lost the road and again the coachman got down from the box and danced round the sleds. The sleds flew also, a dark autumn flew swiftly on. A dark heated trace-horse hoofs knocked against the sled. Here there was a fearful ringing sound from the trees and nothing could be seen as though they were flying on into space and all at once the glancing light at the entrance

and the windows flashed upon their eyes and they heard the good natured drawn out barking of dogs. They had arrived.

While they were taking off their fur coats and their felt boots below *Un Petit Verre de Chiquet* was being played upon the piano overhead and they could hear the children beating time with their feet. Immediately on going in they were aware of the snug warmth and special smell of the old apartments of a mansion where whatever the weather outside life is so warm and clean and comfortable.

That's capital! said V. N. Tunitz a fat man with an incredibly thick neck and stiff whiskers as he shook the examining magistrate's hand.

That's capital. You are very welcome delighted to make your acquaintance. We're all here to some extent you know. At one time I was deputy prosecutor but not for long only two years. I came here to look after the estate and here I have grown old—an old fellow in fact. You are very welcome. He went on evidently restraining his voice so as not to speak too loud. He was going upstairs with his guests. I have no wife she's dead. But here I will introduce my daughters and turning round he shouted down the stairs in a voice of thunder. Tell Ignat to take the sledges ready at eight o'clock to-morrow morning.

His four daughters young and pretty girls all wearing grey dresses and with their hair done up in the same style and the three also young and attractive with their children were in the drawing room. Startchenko who knew them already

woman at once began to sing, and two of the young ladies spent a long time declaring they could not sing, and that they had no music. Then the company sat down to the piano and with the trilling voices they sang a duet from "The Queen of Spades." Again "Un Petit Verre de Chiquette" was played and the children skipped about beating time with their feet. And Startchenko pranced about too. Everybody had bed.

Then the children said good night and went off to bed. The municipal magistrate landed, danced a quadrille, flared and kept wondering whether it was tall drama. The kitchen of the Zemstvo hut, the happy spot in the corner the rustle of the bushes, the happy poverty stricken surrounding, the voices of the witnesses, the wind, the snow storm, the danger of being lost, and then all at once this splendid brightly lighted room, the sounds of the piano, the laughing, the merry headed children, the gay happy life here—such a transformation seemed to him like a fairy tale and it seemed incredible that such transformations were possible at the distance of some two miles in the course of an hour. And dreary thoughts prevented him from enjoying himself and he kept thinking this was not life itself, but but of fragments that everything here was accidental, that one could draw no conclusions from it and he even felt sorry for the souls who were living and would end their lives in the woods, in a province far away from the centre of culture where nothing is accidental, but everything is in accordance with reason and law and where for instance, every

suicide is intelligible so that one can explain why it has happened and what is its significance in the general scheme of things. He imagined that if the life surrounding him here in the wilds were not intelligible to him and if he did not see it it meant that it did not exist at all.

At supper the conversation turned on Iesnitsky.

He left a wife and child, said Startchenko.

I would forbid neurasthenics and all people whose nervous system is out of order to marry. I would deprive them of the right and possibility of multiplying their kind. To bring into the world nervous invalid children is a crime.

He was an unfortunate young man, said Von Taunitz, sighing gently and shaking his head.

What a lot one must suffer and think about before one brings oneself to take one's own life, a young life! Such a misfortune may happen in any family and that is awful. It is hard to bear such a thing insufferable.

And all the girls listened in silence with grave faces looking at their father. Lyzhnif thought that he too must say something but he couldn't think of anything and merely said:

Yes, suicide is an unpleasant phenomenon.

He slipped in a chair and on in a soft bed covered with a quilt under which there were fine clean sheets but for some reason did not feel comfortable perhaps because the doctor and Von Taunitz were for a long time talking in the adjoining room and overhead he heard through the ceiling and in the stove the wind roaring just as in the Zemtvo hut and as plaintively howling. Oo-oo-o-oo!

Von Tanniz and I had died two years before, and he was still unable to get over himself to his loss and whatever he was talking about always mentioned his wife and there was no trace of a present or life about him now.

It is possible that in some day come to such a condition though Lyzhin as he fell asleep still hearing though the wall his host's subdued, as it were, beamed voice.

The examining magistrate did not sleep soundly. He felt hot and uncomfortable and it seemed to him that even though he was not at Von Tanniz and not in his bed but still in the hay at the Zernich but he and the bedded ones of the witnesses he feared that the Lesnitski was close by not fifteen paces away. In his dreams he remembered how the insurance agent black haired and pale, wearing dust high boots had come into the book keeper's office. This insurance agent

Then he dreamed that Lesnitski and Loshadin the constable were walking through the open country in the snow and beside supporting each other the coach was whirling about their heads the wind was blowing in the bells but they walked on singing. We go on, and on, and on.

The old man was like a musician in an opera, and both of them were singing as though they were on the stage.

We go on, and on, and on. You are in the warmth in the light and no more, but we are walking in the frost and the storm through the deep snow. We know nothing, I ease w

know nothing of joy We bear all the burden
 of this life yours and ours Oo-oo-oo!
 We go on and on and on

Lyzhn woke and sat up in bed. What a confused bad dream. And why did he dream of the constable and the agent together? What nonsense! And now while Lyzhn's heart was throbbing violently and he was sitting on his bed holding his head in his hands it seemed to him that there really was something in common between the lives of the insurance agent and the constable. Don't they really go side by side holding each other up? Some tie unseen but significant and essential existed between them and even between them and Von Tarnitz and between all men—all men in this life even in the remotest desert nothing is accidental everything is full of one common idea everything has one soul one aim and to understand it it is not enough to think it is not enough to reason one must have also it seems the gift of insight into life a gift which is evidently not bestowed on all. And this unhappy man who had broken down who had killed himself—the neurasthenic as the doctor called him—and this old peasant who spent every day of his life going from one man to another were only accidental were only fragments of life for one who thought of his own life as accidental but were parts of one organism—marvellous and rational—for one who thought of his own life as part of that universal whole and understood it. So thought Lyzhn and it was a thought that had long lain hidden in his soul and only now it

was unfolded broadly and clearly to his consciousness.

He lay down and began to drop asleep and again they were gone along together singing. We go on and on and on. We take from life what is hardest and bitterest in it and we leave you with ease and joy! and still at supper you can coldly and sensibly discuss why we suffer and perish and why we are not as sound and as satisfied as you.

What they were suffering had occurred to his mind before but that thought was somewhere in the back of his mind behind his other thoughts and flickered timidly like a very light in foggy weather. And he felt that this woe and the peasant's sufferings lay upon his conscience too to even himself the fact that these people submit to this if he should take up the burden of what is hardest and gloomiest in life—how awful it was. To accept this and to desire for himself a life full of light and movement among happy and contented people and to be continually dreaming of such means dreaming of fresh skulls of men crushed by toil and anxiety if men weak and outcast whom people only talk of sometimes at supper with an occasional mockery without going to their help. And again.

We go on and on and on as though someone were beating with a hammer on his temples.

He woke early in the morning with a headache, roused by a noise in the next room. Von Tunitz was saying loudly to the doctor

It's impossible for you to go now. Look what's going on outside. Don't argue, you had better ask the coachman, he won't take you in such weather for a million.

But it's only two miles, said the doctor in an imploring voice.

Well, if it were only half a mile. If you can't then you can't. Directly you drive out of the gates it is perfect hell, you would be off the road in a minute. Nothing will induce me to let you go, you can say what you like.

It's bound to be quieter towards evening, said the peasant who was heating the stove.

And in the next room the doctor began talking of the rigorous climate and its influence on the character of the Russian, of the long winters which by preventing movement from place to place hinder the intellectual development of the people, and Lyzhin listened with vexation to these observations and looked out of window at the snow drifts which were piled on the fence. He gazed at the white dust which covered the whole visible expanse, at the trees which bowed their heads despairingly to right and then to left, listened to the howling and the banging and thought gloomily.

Well, what moral can be drawn from it? It's a blizzard and that is all about it.

At midday they had lunch, then wandered aimlessly about the house, they went to the windows.

And Lesnitsky is lying there, thought Lyzhin, watching the whirling snow which raced furiously

round and round upon the drifts Lesnatsky is lying there the witnesses are waiting

They talked of the weather saying that the now storm usually lasted two days and nights rarely longer At six o'clock they had dinner then they played cards sang danced at last they had supper Then day was over they went to bed

In the night towards morning it all subsided When they got up and looked out of window there were willows with their weakly drooping branches wet and in perfectly motionless it was dull and still as though Nature now were ashamed of its rage of the mad nights and the hence it had at night its pangs The horses harnessed and in hand were waiting at the front door since five o'clock in the morning When it was fully daylight the doctor and the taxman, the magistrate put on their fur coats and felt boots and saying good by to their host went out

At the steps beside the coachman took the familiar form of the onshabl Ilva Ioshadun with an old leather bag across his shoulder and no cap on his head covered with snow all over and his face was red and wet with perspiration The footman who had come at the help of the gentlemen and before their legs looked at him sternly and said

What are you standing here for you idle idler? Get away

You know well the people are now as said Ioshadun nothing naturally ill or ill fact and evidently pleased at seeing that the people had waited for so long The people are crying

uneasy the children we crying They
thought your honour that you had gone back
to the town again Show us the heavenly mercy
our benefactors !

The doctor and the examining magistrate said
nothing, got into the sledge and drove to Syrnya

THE FIRST CLASS PASSENGER

THE FIRST CLASS PASSENGER

A FIRST CLASS passenger who had just dined at the station and drunk a little too much lay down on the velvet covered seat stretched himself out luxuriously and sank into a doze. After a nap of no more than five minutes he looked with oily eyes at his watch and gave a smirk and said

My father of blessed memory used to like to have his heels tickled by peasant women after dinner. I am just like him with this difference that after dinner I always like my tongue and my brains gently stimulated. Sinful man as I am I like empty talk on a full stomach. Will you allow me to have a chat with you?

I shall be delighted answered the visitor.

After a good dinner the most trifling subject is sufficient to arouse devilishly great thoughts in my brain. For instance we saw just now near the refreshment bar two young men and you heard one congratulate the other on being celebrated. I congratulate you he said. you are already a celebrity and are beginning to win fame. Evidently actors or journalists of microscopic dimensions. But they are not the point. The question that is occupying my mind at the moment sir is exactly what is to be understood by the word

same or celestial. What do you think? Pushkin called him a bright patch or a ragged garment. We all understand it as Pushkin does—that is, more or less objects to it—but no one has yet given a clear literal definition of the word. I would give a good deal for such a definition.

Why do I feel such a need for it?

You see I know what fire is the means of attaining it might also perhaps be known to us said the first-class passenger after a moment's thought. I must tell you sir that when I was younger I strove after celebrity with every fibre of my being. To be popular was my craze so to speak. For the sake of it I neglected work sat up at night neglected my meals. And I fancy as far as I am judge without partiality I had all the natural gifts for attaining it. To begin with I am an engineer by profession. In the course of my life I have built in Russia some twelve magnificent bridges I have laid queducts for three towns I have worked in Russia, England, in Belgium. Secondly I am the author of several special treatises in my own language. And thirdly my dear sir I have from a boy had a weakness for chemistry. Studying that science in my leisure hours I discovered methods of obtaining certain organic acids so that you will find my name in all the foreign manuals of chemistry. I have always been in the service I have risen to the grade of full colonel or and I have an unblemished record. I will not trouble your attention by enumerating my works and my merits. I will only say that I have done far more than some celebrities.

And yet here I am in my old age I am getting ready for my coffin to say and I am as celebrated as that black dog yonder running on the embankment

How can you tell? Perhaps you are celebrated

Hm! Well we will test it at once Tell me have you ever heard the name Arrikunov?

The name is raised in yes to the ceiling thought a minute and laughed

No I haven't heard it he said

That is my surname You a man of education getting on in years have never heard of me—a convincing proof! It is evident that in my efforts to gain fame I have not done the right thing at all I did not know the right way to set to work and trying to cut a fame by the tail got on the wrong side of her

What is the right way to set to work?

Well the devil only knows Talent you say? Genius? Originality? Not a bit of it sir People have tried and made a career side by side with men who are worthless trivial and even contemptible compared with me They did not do one-tenth of the work I did had not put themselves out ever not distinguished for their talents and did not make an effort to be celebrated but just look at the names Their names are continually in the newspapers and on men's lips If you are not tired of listening I will illustrate it by an example Some year ago I built a bridge in the town where I must tell you that the dullness of that scurvy little town was terrible If it had not been for

woman and ards I believe I should have gone out of my mind. Well it's an old story. I was so bored that I got into an affair with a singer. Eryn was enthusiastic about her the devil only knows why to my thinking she was—what shall I say?—an ordinary commonplace creature like lots of others. The hussy was empty headed, ill tempered, greedy and what's more she was a fool.

She ate and drank a vast amount, slept till five o'clock in the afternoon—and I fancy did nothing else. She was looked upon as a cocotte and that was indeed her profession but when people wanted to refer to her in a literary fashion they called her an actress and a singer. I used to be devoted to the theatre and therefore the fraudulent pretence of being an actress made me furiously indignant. My young lady had not the slightest right to call herself an actress or singer. She was a creature entirely devoid of talent, devoid of feeling—a pitiful creature one may say. As far as I can judge she sang disgustingly. The whole charm of her art lay in her kicking up her legs on every suitable occasion and not being embarrassed when people walked into her dressing room. She usually selected translated vaudeville with singing in them and opportunities for disporting her limbs in male attire in the hit. In fact it was—oh. Well I ask your attention. As I remember now a public ceremony took place to celebrate the opening of the newly constructed bridge. There was a religious service there were speeches telegrams and so on.

I hung about my cherished creation you know all the while afraid that my heart would burst with the excitement of an author. It's an old story and there's no need for false modesty and so I will tell you that my bridge was a magnificent work! It was not a bridge but a picture a perfect delight. And who would not have been excited when the whole town came to the opening? Oh I thought now the eyes of all the public will be on me! Where shall I hide myself? Well I need not have worried myself sir--alas. Except the official personages no one took the slightest notice of me. They stood in a crowd on the river bank gazed like sheep at the bridge and did not concern themselves to know who had built it. And it was from that time by the way that I began to hate our estimable public--damnation take them. Well to continue. All at once the public became agitated a whisper ran through the crowd a smile came on the faces their shoulders began to move. They must have seen me I thought. A likely idea. I looked and my singer with a train of young scamps was making her way through the crowd. The eyes of the crowd were hurriedly following the procession. A whisper began in a thousand voices. That's so and so. Charming. Bewitching. Then it was they noticed me. A couple of young mulksop local mutants of the scenery art I presume looked at me exchanged glances and whispered. That's her lover. How do you like that? And an unprepossessing individual in a top-hat with a chin that badly needed shaving hung round me shift

from one foot to the other then turned to me with the words

Do you know who that lady is walking on the other bank? That's so-and-so. Her you is beneath all criticism but she has a most perfect mastery of it.

Can you tell me I asked the ungraceful individual who built this bridge?

I really don't know answered the individual some engineer I perceived.

And who built the cathedral in your town? I asked again.

I don't know.

Then I told him he was considered the best teacher in the whole district and to all my questions the ungraceful individual answered that he did not know.

And tell me please I asked him in conclusion with what is the singing like there.

Will soon answer all that.

Well I would like to tell you. But to proceed. There are no mimesingers or bards nowadays. I celebrate a celebrated artist exclusively by the newspaper. The day after the dedication of the bridge I greedily snatched up the local *Mei teng* and looked for his name. I spent five minutes running my eyes over all the four pages and at last there it was—hurrah! I have read!

Yesterday a beautiful weather before a discourse of people in the province. His Excellency the Governor of the province so-and-so and other authorities the ceremony of the dedication of the newly erected bridge took place.

and so on. Towards the end. Our talented actress so-and-so the favourite of the public was present at the dedication looking very beautiful. I need not say that her arrival created a sensation. The star was wearing and so on. They might have given me one word! Half a word. Petty as it seems I actually cried with vexation!

I consoled myself with the reflection that the provinces are stupid and one could expect nothing of them and for celebrity one must go to the intellectual centres—to Petersburg and to Moscow. And as it happened at that very time there was a work of mine in Petersburg which I had sent in for a competition. The date on which the result was to be declared was at hand.

I took leave of K. and I went to Petersburg. It is a long journey from K. to Petersburg and that I might not be bored on the journey I took a reserved compartment and—well—of course I took my singer. We set off and all the way we were eating drinking champagne and—tra la la! But behold at last we reached the intellectual centre. I arrived on the very day the result was declared and I had the satisfaction myself of celebrating my own success. My work received the first prize. Hurray! Next day I went out alone, the Nevsky and spent seventy kopecks on various newspapers. I hastened to my hotel room lay down on the sofa and controlling a quarter of excitement made haste to read. I ran through one newspaper—nothing. I ran through the second—nothing either my God! At last in the fourth I lighted upon the following.

paragraph Yesterday the well known provincial actress so-and-so arrived by express in Peterburg We note with pleasure that the climate of the South has had a beneficial effect on our friend her charming stage appearance and I don't remember the rest Much lower down than that paragraph I found, printed in the smallest type

The first prize in the competition was adjudged to an engineer called so-and-so That was all And to make things better they even misspelt my name instead of Krikuno it was Krikunov So much for your intellectual centre But that was not all

By the time I left Petersburg a month later all the newspapers were vying with one another in discussing our incomparable diminutive highly talented actress and my mistress was referred to not by her surname but by her Christian name and her first name

Some years later I was in Moscow I was summoned there by a letter in the mayor's own handwriting to undertake a work for which Moscow in its newspapers had been clamouring for over a hundred years In the intervals of my work I delivered public lectures with a philanthropic object in view of the museum there One would have thought that was enough to make one known to the whole town for three days at least wouldn't one? But alas not a single Moscow gazette said a word about me There was something about houses on fire, about an operetta sleeping town council's drunk night-porters—about everything but about my work my plans my lectures—nothing And a nice set

they are in Moscow. I got into a tram. It was packed full there were ladies and military men and students of both sexes creatures of all sorts in couples.

I am told the town council has sent for an engineer to plan such and such a work. I said to my neighbour so loudly that all the tram could hear. Do you know the name of the engineer?

My neighbour shook his head. The rest of the public took a cursory glance at me and in all their eyes I read. I don't know.

I am told that there is someone giving lectures in such and such a museum? I persisted trying to get up a conversation. I hear it is interesting.

None nodded. Evidently they had not all of them heard of the lectures and the ladies were not even aware of the existence of the museum. All that would not have mattered but imagine my distress the people suddenly clapped to their feet and struggled to the windows. What was it? What was the matter?

Look look my neighbour nudged me. Do you see that dark man getting into that cab? That's the famous runner King.

And the whole tram began talking breathlessly of the runner who was absorbing the brains of Moscow.

I could give you ever so many other examples but I think that is enough. Now let us assume that I am mistaken about myself that I am a wretchedly boastful and incompetent person but apart from myself I might point to many of

my contemporaries men remarkable for their talent and industry who have nevertheless died unrecognized. Are Russian navigators chemists physicists mechanicians and agriculturists popular with the public? Do our cultivated masses know anything of Russian artists sculptors and literary men? Some old literary hack, faded, working, and talented will wear away the doorstep of the publishers' offices for thirty three years, cover reams of paper be had up & libel twenty times and yet not step beyond his ant heap. Can you mention to me a single representative of our literature who would have become celebrated if the rumour had not been spread over the earth that he had been killed in a duel & gone out of his mind, been sent into exile or had cheated at cards.

The first-class passenger was so excited that he dropped his chair out of his mouth and got up.

Yes, he went on fiercely and said by said with these people I can quote you hundreds of all sorts of singers, actors, buffoons whose names are known to every baby. Yes.

The door creaked there was a draught and an individual of forbidding aspect wearing an Inverness coat a top-hat and blue spectacles walked into the carriage. The individual looked round at the seats frowned and went on further.

Do you know who that there came a timid whisper from the furthest corner of the compartment. That is N N the famous Tula card-sharper who was had up in connection with the N bank affair.

There you see laughed the first-class pas-

senger He knows a Tula cardsharper but ask him whether he knows Semiradsky Tchaykovsky or Solovyov the philosopher—he ll shake his head

It s swinish

Three minutes passed in silence

Allow me in my turn to ask you a question said the vis-d-vis timidly clearing his throat

Do you know the name of Pushkov?

Pushkov? Hm Pushkov No I don t know it

That is my name said the vis-d-vis overcome with embarrassment Then you don t know it? And yet I have been a professor at one of the Russian universities for thirty five years

a member of the Academy of Sciences have published more than one work

The first class passenger and the vis-d-vis looked at each other and burst out laughing

A TRAGIC ACTOR

A TRAGIC ACTOR

It was the benefit night of Fenogenov the tragic actor. They were acting Prince Serebryany. The tragedian himself was playing Vyazensky Limonadov, the stage manager was playing Morozov, Madame Beobahtov Elena. The performance was a grand success. The tragedian accomplished wonders indeed. When he was carrying off Elena, he held her in one hand above his head as he dashed across the stage. He shouted, hissed, banged with his feet, tore his coat across his chest. When he refused to fight Morozov, he trembled all over as nobody ever trembles in reality, and gasped loudly. The theatre shook with applause. There were endless calls. Fenogenov was presented with a silver cigarette case and a bouquet tied with long ribbons. The ladies waved their handkerchiefs and urged their men to applaud, many shed tears. But the one who was the most enthusiastic and most excited was Masha, daughter of Sidoretsky, the police captain. She was sitting in the first row of the stalls beside her papa. She was ecstatic and could not take her eyes off the stage even between the acts. Her delicate little hands and feet were quivering, her eyes were full of tears, her cheeks

turned paler and paler. And no wonder—she
saw that theatre for the first time in her life.

How well they acted how splendidly! she said
to her papa the police captain every time the cur-
tain fell. How good Fenogenov is.

And if her papa had been capable of reading
faces he would have read in his daughter's pale
little countenance a rapture that was almost
anguish. She was overcome by it, acting by the
play by the surroundings. When the regimental
band began playing between the acts she closed
her eyes exhausted.

Papa, she said to the police captain during
that last interval, go behind the scenes and ask
them all to dine to-morrow.

The police captain went behind the scenes
praised them all for the fine acting and com-
plimented Madame Beobabto.

Your lovely face demands a banana, and I only
wish I could wield the brush!

And with a scrape he threw upon it the
company to dinner.

All except the fair servant, who whispered, I
don't want the actresses for my daughter.

Next day the actors dined at the police captain's.
Only three turned up: the manager Limonadov,
the tragedian Fenogenov, and the comic man
Vodolazov; the others sent excuses. The dinner
was a dull affair. Limonadov kept telling the
police captain how much he respected him, and
how highly he thought of all persons in authority.
Vodolazov mimicked drunken merchants and
Armenians, and Fenogenov (on his passport his

name was I nush) a tall stout Little Russian with black eyes and frowning brow declaimed At the portals of the great and To be or not to be Limonadov with tears in his eyes described his interview with the former Governor General Kanyutchin The police captain listened was bored and smiled affably He was well satisfied although Limonadov smelt strongly of burnt feathers and Fenogenov was wearing a hired dress-coat and boots trodden down at heel They pleased his daughter and made her lively and that was enough for him And Masha never took her eyes off the actors She had never before seen such clever exceptional people

In the evening the police captain and Masha were at the theatre again A week later the actors dined at the police captain's again and after that came almost every day either to dinner or supper Masha became more and more devoted to the theatre and went there every evening

She fell in love with the tragedian One fine morning when the police captain had gone to meet the bishop Masha ran away with Limonadov's company and married her hero on the way After celebrating the wedding the actors composed a long and touching letter and sent it to the police captain It was the work of their combined efforts

Bringing out the motive the motive! Limonadov kept saying as he dictated to the comic man

I lay on the respect These official chaps like it Add something of a sort to draw a tear

The answer to this letter was most discomforting. The police captain disowned his daughter for marrying as he said "a stupid idle Little Russian with no fixed home or occupation."

And the day after this answer Vas received Masha was writing to her father:

Papa, he beats me. Forgive us!

He had beaten her before ten her behind the scenes in the presence of Limonadov, the washer woman, and the other men. He remembered how four days before the wedding he was sitting in the London Theatre with the whole company and all were talking about Masha. The company were advising him to decline it, and Limonadov with tears in his eyes urged: "It would be stupid and irrational to let slip such an opportunity. Why for a sum like that one would go to Siberia let alone getting married. When you marry and have a father of your own take him into your company. I shan't be master then you'll be master."

Fenechov remembered this and muttered with clenched fists:

If he doesn't send me money I'll smash him. I won't let myself be made a fool of damn my soul!

At one provincial town the company tried to give Masha the slip, but Masha found out, ran to the station and got there when the second bell had rung and the actors had all taken their seats.

"I've been shamefully treated by you if there shall be the tragedian, all is over between us."

And though the carriage was full of people she went down on her knees and held out her hands imploring him.

I love you ! Don't drive me away Kondraty Ivanovitch she besought him I can't live without you

They listened to her entreaties and after consulting to ether took her into the company as a countess —the name they used for the minor actresses who usually came on to the stage in crowds or in dumb parts To begin with Masha used to play maid servants and pages but when Madame Beobahtov the floer of Luronador's company eloped they made her *unlue* She acted badly lisped and was nervous She soon grew used to it howe'er and began to be liked by the audien e Tenogenov as much displeased

To call her an actress he used to say

She has no figure no deportment nothing what ever but silliness

In one provincial town the company acted Schiller's Robbers Tenogenov played Franz Masha Amali The tragedian shouted and quivered Masha repeated her part like a well learnt lesson and the play would have gone off as they generally did had it not been for a trifling mishap Everything went well up to the point where Franz declares his love for Amali and she seizes his sword The tragedian shouted hissed quivered and squeezed Masha in his iron embrace And Masha instead of repulsing him and crying Hence trembled in his arms like a bird and did not move she seemed petrified

Have pity on me she whispered in his ear
Oh have pity on me I am so miserable

You don't know your part! Listen to the

prompter handed the tragedian and he thrust his sword into her hand.

After the performance Limonadov and Fenogorov were sitting in the ticket box-office engaged in conversation.

Your wife does not learn her part, you are right there, the manager was saying. She doesn't know her line. Every man has his own line, but she doesn't know hers.

Fenogorov listened, sighed and scowled and scowled.

Next morning Masha was sitting in a little general shop writing.

Papa, he beats me. Forgive us. Send us some money.

A TRANSGRESSION

A TRANSGRESSION

A COLLEGIATE assessor called Miguev stopped at a telegraph post in the course of his evening walk and heaved a deep sigh. A week before as he was returning home from his evening walk he had been overtaken at that very spot by his former housemaid Agnia who said to him viciously

Wait a bit. I'll cook you such a crab that'll teach you to ruin innocent girls. I'll leave the baby at your door and I'll have the law of you and I'll tell your wife too.

And she demanded that he should put five thousand roubles into the bank in her name. Miguev remembered it, heaved a sigh and once more reproached himself with heartfelt repentance for that momentary infatuation which had caused him so much worry and misery.

When he reached his bungalow he sat down to rest on the doorstep. It was just ten o'clock and a sliver of the moon peeped out from behind the clouds. There was not a soul in the street nor near the bungalow's elderly summer visitors were already going to bed while young ones were walking in the cool. Feeling in both his pockets for a match to light his cigarette Miguev brought his elbow into contact with something soft. He looked

idly at his right elbow and his face was instantly contorted by a look of as much horror as though he had seen a snake beside him. On the step at the entry door lay a bundle. Something oblong, in shape was wrapped up in something thin — judging by the feel of it a wadded quilt. One end of the bundle was a little open and the collegiate assessor putting in his hand felt something damp and warm. He leaped on to his feet in horror and looked about him like a criminal trying to escape from his warders.

She has left it, he muttered wrathfully through his teeth clenching his fists. Her titles. Here lies in translation. O Lord

He was numb with terror and shame. What was he to do now? What would his wife say if she found out? What would his colleagues at the office say? His Excellency would be sure to rub him in the ribs guffaw and say, I congratulate you. He-he-he. Though your beard is grey your heart is gay. You are a rogue, Semën Erastovich. The whole colony of summer visitors would know his secret now and probably the respectable mothers of families would shut their doors to him. Such an incident always got into the papers and the humble name of Maguev would be published all over Russia.

The middle window of the bungalow was open and he could distinctly hear his wife, Anna Filipovna, lying there till for supper in the yard close to the gate. Yermolay the porter was plaintively humming on the balalaika. The baby had only to wake up and begin to cry and the secret would

be discovered. Miguev was conscious of an overwhelming desire to make haste.

Haste, haste, he muttered, this minute before anyone sees. I'll carry it away and lay it on somebody's doorstep.

Miguev took the bundle in one hand and quietly with a deliberate step to avoid awakening suspicion, went down the street.

A wonderfully nasty position, he reflected, trying to assume an air of unconcern. A collegiate assessor walking down the street with a baby! Good heavens! if anyone sees me and understands the position, I am done for. I'd better put it on this doorstep. No stay, the windows are open and perhaps someone is looking. Where shall I put it? I know. I'll take it to the merchant Myelkin. Merchants are rich people and tender-hearted. Very likely they will say thank you and accept it.

And Miguev made up his mind to take the baby to Myelkin's, although the merchant's villa was in the furthest street, close to the river.

If only it does not begin screaming or wriggle out of the bundle, thought the collegiate assessor.

This is indeed a pleasant surprise. Here I am carrying a human being under my arm as though it were a portfolio. A human being, alive with soul, with feelings like anyone else. If by good luck the Myelkins adopt him, he may turn out somebody. Maybe he will become a professor, a great general, an author. Anything may happen. Now I am carrying it under my arm like a bundle of rubbish and perhaps in

thirty or forty years I may not dare to sit down in his presence

As Migu was walking in a narrow deserted alley behind a long row of fences in the thick black shadow of them it suddenly struck him that it was long something very cruel and criminal

It was mean to sell the child he thought So mean that one might agree anything meaner Why are we lifting this poor baby from door to door? It isn't the first time it's been born It's long as no far We see under us We take our pleasure in it. Orphan babies have to pay the price. Oh let's think of all this wretched business. I can never go and the child has suffered before. If I lay it at the Vy Lins door they'll send it to the foundling hospital and there it will get warm and strong. A mechanical tin doll no petting no spoiling And then he'll be apprenticed to a shoemaker. He'll have to drink will learn to use filthy language will get hungry. A shoemaker and he the son of a collegiate assessor of good family. He my flesh and blood

Migu came out of the shade of the lime trees into the bright moonlight of the open road and opening the bundle he looked at the baby

Asleep he murmured You little rascal why you are equal in nose to your father He sleeps and doesn't feel that this is his own father looking at him It's a dream my boy Well well you must forgive me Forgive me old boy It seems it's your father

The collegiate assessor blinked and felt a spasm running down his cheeks. He wrapped up the baby put him under his arm and strode on. All the way to the Myelkins villa social questions were swarming in his brain and conscience was gnawing in his bosom.

If I were a decent honest man he thought I should damn everythug go with this baby to Anna Filippovna fall on my knees before her and say Forgive me I have sinned Torture me but we won't ruin an innocent child We have no children let us adopt him She's a good sort she'd consent And then my child would be with me Ech

He reached the Myelkins villa and stood still hesitating. He imagined himself in the parlour at home sitting reading the paper while a little boy with an aquiline nose played with the tassels of his dress or gown. At the same time visions forced themselves on his brain of his winking colleagues and of his Excellency dignifying him in the ribs and guffawing. Besides the pricking of his conscience there was something warm sad and tender in his heart.

Cautiously the collegiate assessor laid the baby on the verandah step and waved his hand. Again he felt a spasm run over his face.

Forgive me old fellow! I am a scoundrel he muttered. Don't remember evil against me!

He stepped back but immediately cleared his throat resolutely and said

Oh come what will! Damn it all! I'll take him and let people say what they like

And he took the baby and trode rapidly back

Let them say what they like he thought
 I'll get the full on my knees and say Anna
 Filippovna Anna is good sort she'll under-
 stand And we'll bring him up If it's
 a boy call him Vladimir and if it's a girl we'll
 call her Anna ! Anyway it will be a comfort in
 our old age

And he decided he determined Weeping and
 almost faint with shame and terror full of hope
 and vague rapture he went to his bungalow
 went up to his wife and fell on his knees before
 her

Anna Filippovna he said with a sob and
 he laid the baby on the floor Hear me before
 you punish I have sinned ! This is my
 child You remember Agnaya ? Well it was
 the devil do me to it

And almost unconscious with shame and terror
 he jumped up without waiting for an answer and
 ran out into the open air as though he had received
 a thrashing

I'll stay here outside till she calls me he
 thought I'll give him time to recover and to
 think it over

The porter Yermolay passed him with his bala-
 laik glancing at him and shrugged his shoulders
 A minute later he passed him again and again he
 shrugged his shoulders

Here's a girl ! Did you ever he muttered
 grinning Aksinya the wretched woman as here
 is it now Semyon Erstich The silly woman
 put her baby down on the steps here and while

she was indoors with me someone took and carried off the baby Who d have thought it

What? What are you saying? shouted Miguev at the top of his voice

Yermolay interpreting his master's wrath in his own fashion scratched his head and heaved a sigh

I am sorry Semyon Trastitch he said but it's the summer holidays one can't get on without without a woman I mean

And glancing at his master eyes glaring at him with anger and astonishment he cleared his throat guiltily and went on

It's a sir of course but there—what's one to do? You've forbidden us to have strangers in the house I know but we've none of our own now When Agnia was here I had no women to see me for I had one at home but no you can see for yours If your son can't help having strangers In Agnia's time of course there was nothing irregular because

Be off you sons of I! Miguev shouted at him stamping and he went back into the room

Anna Filippovna amazed and wrathful was sitting as before her tear-stained eyes fixed on the baby

There! there! Miguev muttered with a pale face twisting his lips into a smile It was a joke It's not my baby it's the washer woman's I I was joking Take it to the porter

SMALL FRY

SMALL FRY

HONOURED Sir Father and Ben factor! a petty clerk called Nevvrazimov was writing a rough copy of an Easter congratulatory letter. "I trust that you may spend this Holy Day even as many more to come in good health and prosperity. And to your family also!"

The lamp in which the kerosene was getting low was smoking and smelling. A stray cockroach was running about the table in alarm near Nevvrazimov's writing hand. Two rooms away from the office Paramon the porter was for the third time cleaning his best boots and with such energy that the sound of the blacking brush and of his expectorations was audible in all the rooms.

What else can I write to him the rascal? Nevvrazimov wondered raising his eyes to the smutty ceiling.

On the ceiling he saw a dark circle—the shadow of the lamp shade. Below it was the dusty cornice and lower still the wall which had once been painted a bluish muddy colour. And the office seemed to him such a place of desolation that he felt sorry not only for himself but even for the cockroach.

When I am off duty I shall go away but he'll be on duty here all this cockroaches! I feel he thought

street here I am bored Shall I clean my boots?

And trotting one more Nevvrazimov slouched lazily to the porter room Paramon had finished cleaning his boots Cleaning himself with one hand and holding the brush in the other he was standing at the open window pane listening.

They're in, he whispered to Nevvrazimov looking at him with yes-intent and wide open Alacrily.

Nevvrazimov pulled out the pen-pen and listened. The Easter hymns floated into the room with what a fresh pungency! The booming of the bell mingled with the rumble of organs and above the choral sound rose the brisk tenor tones of the nearest church and a loud shrill laugh.

What a lot of people! sighed Nevvrazimov looking down at the street where shadows of men flitted on after another by the illumination lamps. They're all hurrying to the midnight service. Our fellows here had a drink by now you may be sure and are talking about the town. What a lot of flouters what a lot of talk! I'm the only one left on to have to get their noses in a day. And I have to do it every year.

Well nobody for easy but take the job. It's not your turn to be on duty to-day but Z-stupor hired you to take his place. When their folks are enjoying themselves you have your life in it. It's greediness.

Devil a bit of it. Not much to be greedy over—two roubles is all he gives me a necktie as
 ———— It's poverty not greediness.

And it would be jolly now you know to be going with a party to the service and then to break the fast

To drink and to have a bit of supper and tumble off to sleep One sits down to the table there's an Easter cake and the samovar hissing and some charming little thing beside you

You drink a glass and chuck her under the chin and it's first rate You feel you're somebody

Ech h h I've made a mess of things Look at that hussy driving by in her carriage while I have to sit here and brood

We each have our lot in life Ivan Danilitch Please God you'll be promoted and drive about in your carriage one day

I? No brother not likely I shan't get beyond a titular not if I try till I burst I'm not an educated man

Our General has no education either but

Well but the General stole a hundred thousand before he got his position And he's got very different manners and deportment from me brother With my manners and deportment one can't get far And such a scoundrilly surname Nevvrazimov! It's a hopeless position in fact One may go on as one is or one may hang one self

He moved away from the window and walked wearily about the rooms The din of the bells grew louder and louder There was no need to stand by the window to hear it And the better he could hear the bells and the louder the roar of the carriages the darker seemed the muddy

walls and the mutty cornice and the more the lamp smoked

'Shall I hook it and I have the office?' thought Nevvraz mo

But she has a flight from sedition thing worth having

After coming out of the office and wandering about the town Nevvrazimov would have gone to me to his lodging and in his lodging it was even greyer and more depressing than in the office

Even supposing he were to spend that day pleasantly and with comfort what had he beyond? Nothing but the same grey walls the same stopping place and complimentary letters

Nevvrazimov stood still in the middle of the office and sank into thought. The yearning for a new better life gnawed at his heart with an intolerable ache. He had a passionate inclination to find himself suddenly in the street to mingle with the living crowd to take part in the solemn festivity for the sake of which all those bells rang and those carriages were rumbling. He longed for what he had known in childhood—the family circle the festive faces of his own people the white light warmth.

He thought of the carriage in which the lady had just driven by in the overcoat in which the head clerk was so smart the gold chain that adorned the secretary's chest.

He thought of the arm bed of the Stanislav order of new boots of a uniform without holes in the elbows.

He thought of all those things because he had none of them.

'Shall I steal?' he thought. Even if stealing is an easy matter he thought what is difficult? Men

run away to America they say with what they've stolen but the devil knows where that blessed America is. One must have education even to steal it seems.

The bells died down. He heard only a distant noise of carriages and Paramon cough while his depression and anger grew more and more intense and unbearable. The clock in the office struck half past twelve.

Shall I write a secret report? Proshkin did and he rose rapidly.

Nevyrazimov stood in at his table and pondered. The lamp in which the kerosene had quite run dry was smoking violently and threatening to go out. The stray cockroach was still running about the table and he found no resting place.

One can always send in a secret report but how is one to make it up? I should want to make all sorts of innuendoes and insinuations like Proshkin and I can't do it. If I made up anything I should be the first to get into trouble for it. I'm an ass and my soul!

And Nevryazimov, racking his brain for a means of escape from his hopeless position, stared at the rough copy he had written. The letter, as written to a man whom he feared and hated with his whole soul and from whom he had for the last ten years been trying to wring a post office eighteen roubles a month instead of the nine he had at sixteen roubles.

Ah, I'll tell you to run here, you devil! He viciously slapped the palm of his hand on the

cockroach who had the misfortune to catch his eye. 'Nasty thing.'

The cockroach fell on its back and wriggled its legs in despair. Nevryazimov took it by one leg and threw it into the lamp. The lamp flared up and spluttered.

And Nevryazimov felt better.

THE REQUIEM

THE REQUIEM

In the village church of Verkhny Zagrudny mass was just over. The people had begun moving and were trooping out of church. The only one who did not move was Andrey Andreyitch, a shopkeeper and old inhabitant of Verkhny Zagrudny. He stood leaning with his elbows on the railing of the right choir. His fat and shaggy face covered with indentations left by pimples expressed on this occasion two contradictory feelings: resignation in the face of inevitable destiny and stupid unbowed disdain for the smocks and striped kerchiefs passing by him. As it was Sunday he was dressed like a dandy. He wore a long cloth overcoat with yellow bone buttons, blue trousers not thrust into his boots, and sturdy goloshes—the huge clumsy goloshes only seen on the feet of practical and prudent persons of firm religious convictions.

His torpid eyes sunk in fat were fixed upon the icon stand. He saw the long familiar figures of the saints, the vigorous Matvey puffing out his cheeks and blowing out the candles, the darkened candle stands, the threadbare carpet, the sacristan, Lojushov, running impulsively from the altar and carrying the holy bread to the churchwarden.

All these things he had seen for years and seen over and over again like the five fingers of his hand. There was only one thing however that was somewhat strange and unusual. Father Grigory till in his vestments was standing at the north door twitching his thick eyebrows angrily.

Who is that winking at? God bless him thought the shopkeeper. And he is beckoning with his finger. And he stamped his foot. What next. What the matter. Holy Queen and Mother. Whom does he mean it for?

Andrey Andreyitch looked round and saw the church completely deserted. There were some ten people standing at the door but they had their backs to the altar.

Do come when you are called. Why do you stand like a graven image? he heard Father Grigory's angry voice. I am calling you.

The shopkeeper looked at Father Grigory's red and wrathful face and only then realized that the twitching eyebrows and beckoning finger might refer to him. He started, left the aisle and hesitatingly walked towards the altar tramping with his heavy goshes.

Andrey Andreyitch was it you asked for prayers for the rest of Marya's soul? asked the priest his eyes angrily transfixing the shopkeeper's fat perspiring face.

Yes I then.

Then it was you wrote this? You? And Father Grigory angrily thrust before his eyes the little note.

And on this little note handed in by Andrey

Andreyitch before mass was written in big as it were staggering letters

For the rest of the soul of the servant of God the harlot Mariya

Ye certainly I wrote it answered the shopkeeper

How dared you write it? whispered the priest and in his husky whisper there was a note of wrath and alarm

The shopkeeper looked at him in blank amazement he was perplexed and he too was alarmed Father Grigory had never in his life spoken in such a tone to a leading resident of Vehnny Zaprudy Both were silent for a minute staring into each other's face The shopkeeper's amazement was so great that his face spread in all directions like spilt dough

How dared you? repeated the priest

What what? asked Andrey Andreyitch in bewilderment

You don't understand? whispered Father Grigory stepping back in astonishment and clasping his hands What have you got on your shoulders a head or some other object? You send a note up to the altar and write a word in it which it would be unseemly even to utter in the street Why are you rolling your eyes? Surely you know the meaning of the word?

Are you referring to the word harlot? muttered the shopkeeper flushing crimson and blinking. But you know the Lord in His mercy forgave this very thing forgive a harlot He has prepared a place for her and indeed from

the life of the high priest Vnysa of Egypt one may see what sense the word is used—excuse me

The shepherd wanted to bring forward some other argument in his justification but took fright and wiped his lips with his sleeve

So that's what you make of it—cried Father Grigory clasping his hands—But you see God has forgiven it—do you understand? He has forgiven but you judge her—you slander her, call her by an unbecoming name and harm—Your own deceased daughter—Not only in Holy Scripture but even in worldly literature you won't read of such a man—It'll be again Andrey you mustn't be over-subtle—No no you mustn't be over-subtle either—If God has given you an enquiring mind and if you can't direct it better than into things—Don't go into things and hold your peace

But you know she—even my mention of it was an a-tress—articulated Andrey Andreyitch overwhimmed

An a-tress—But whatever she was you ought to forget it all in which is dead instead of writing it on the front

Just so—the shepherd assented

You ought to drop name—boomed the deacon from the depths of the altar looking contemptuously at Andrey Andreyitch's embarrassed face

that would teach you to leave off being so clever—Your daughter was a well-known actress—There were even notices of her death in the newspapers

Philosopher

To be sure—certainly—muttered the

shopkeeper the word is not a seemly one but I did not say it to judge her Father Grigory I only meant to speak spiritually that it might be clearer to you for whom you were praying They write in the memorial notes the various callings such as the infant John the drowned woman Plagea the warrior Yegor the murdered Pavel and so on I meant to do the same

It was foolish Andrey God will forgive you but beware another time Above all don't be subtle but think like other people Make ten bows and go your way

I obey said the shopkeeper relieved that the lecture was over and all winning his face to resume its expression of importance and dignity Ten bows? Very good I understand But no Father allow me to ask you a favour Seeing that I am anyway her father you know yourself whatever she was she was still my daughter so I will excuse me meaning to ask you to sing the requiem to-day And allow me to ask you further Deacon

Well that's good said Father Grigory taking off his vestments That I commend I can approve of that Well go your way We will come out immediately

Andrey Andreyitch walked with dignity from the altar and with a solemn requiem like expression on his red face took his stand in the middle of the church The velvet Vatroy set before him a little table with the memorial food upon it and a little later the requiem service began

There was perfect stillness in the church Noth

ing could be heard but the metallic click of the censer and now in in. Near Andrey Andreyitch stood the vergier Matvey the midwife Makary vna and her one armed son Vlitka. There was no one else. The sacristan sang badly in an unpleasant hollow bass but the tune and the words were so mournful that the shop-keeper little by little lost the expression of dignity and was plunged in sadness. He thought of his Masbutka, he remembered she had been born when he was still a lackey in the service of the owner of Verhny Zaprudny. In his busy life as a lackey he had not noticed how his girl had grown up. That long period during which she was being shaped into a graceful creature with a little flaxen head and dreamy eyes as big as kopeck pieces passed unnoticed by him. She had been brought up like all the children of favoured lackeys in ease and comfort in the company of the young ladies. The gentry to fill up their idle time had taught her to read to write to dance. He had had no hand in her bringing up. Only from time to time casually meeting her at the gate or on the landing of the stair he would remember that she was his daughter and would so far as he had leisure for it begin teaching her the prayers and the scripture. Oh, even then he had the reputation of an authority on the church rules and the holy scriptures! Forbidden and told as her father's face was yet the girl listened readily. She repeated the prayers after him yawning but on the other hand when he hesitated and trying to express himself elaborately began telling her stories she was all

attention Isaac's pottage the punishment of Sodom and the troubles of the boy Joseph made her turn pale and open her blue eyes wide

Afterwards when he gave up being a lackey and with the money he had saved opened a shop in the village Mashutka had gone away to Moscow with his master's family

Three years before her death she had come to see her father. He had scarcely recognized her. She was a graceful young woman with the manner of a young lady and dressed like one. She talked cleverly as though from a book smoked and slept till midday. When Andrei Andreyitch asked her what she was doing, he had announced looking him boldly straight in the face: "I am an actress." Such frankness struck the former flunkey as the acme of cynicism. Mashutka had begun boasting of her successes and her stage life, but seeing that her father only turned crimson and threw up his hands she ceased. And they spent a fortnight together without speaking or looking at one another till the day she went away. Before she went away she asked her father to come for a walk on the bank of the river. Painful as it was for him to walk in the light of day in the sight of all honest people with a daughter who was an actress, he yielded to her request.

"What a lovely place you live in!" she said enthusiastcally. "What ravines and marshes! Good heavens how lovely my native place is!"

And she had burst into tears.

The place is simply taking up room. Andrei Andreyitch had thought looking blankly

THE TALES OF TCHEHOV

at the altar in understanding his daughter's enthusiasm. There is no more profit from them than milk from a bill-goat.

And he had cried and cried drawing her breath greedily with her white chest as though he felt he had not a long time left to breathe.

A door And witch showed his head like a horse that has been bitten and its stifled painful memories began rapidly cross himself.

Be thankful O Lord he muttered, of Thy departed servant the saint Mary and forgive her sins and sins of mine.

The universe would be led from his lips again, but he did not know what is truly embedded in the corner of his heart be driven out by Father Gerasim who was so or even knocked out by a nail. Maryanna asked and whispered whether drawing a deep breath while he armed Mika was bleeding or something.

When there is no knowledge of the being, dread the Christian, or even his right cheek with his hand.

Black smoke coiled up from the altar and bathed in the broad shining patch of sunshine which cut across the gloomy lifeless emptiness of the church. And it seemed as though the soul of the dead woman were soaring, the sunlight together with the smoke. The thick smoke like a child curled round and round floating upwards to the window and as it went holding away from the woes and tribulations of which the poor soul was full.

IN THE COACH HOUSE

IN THE COACH HOUSE

IT was between nine and ten o'clock in the evening Stepan the coachman, Mikhailo the house porter, Alyoshka the coachman's grandson, who had come up from the village to stay with his grandfather, and Nikandr, an old man of seventy, who used to come into the yard every evening to sell salt herrings, were sitting round a lantern in the big coach house playing kings. Through the wide-open door could be seen the whole yard, the big house where the master's family lived, the gates, the cellars, and the porter's lodge. It was all shrouded in the darkness of night and only the four windows of one of the lodges which was lit were brightly lit up. The shadows of the coaches and sledges with their shafts tipped up yards stretched from the walls to the doors, quivering and cutting across the shadows cast by the lantern and the players.

On the other side of the thin partition that divided the coach house from the stable were the horses. There was a scent of hay and a disagreeable smell of salt herrings coming from old Nikandr.

The porter won and was kindling a second attitudinal such as was in his opinion best fitting a king, and blew his nose loudly on a red checked handkerchief.

I have orders to go to the police station to-morrow said the porter. There will be an enquiry. But what do I know about it? I saw nothing of it. He called me this morning gave me a letter and said. Put it in the letter box for me. And his eyes were red with crying. His wife and children were not at home. They had gone out for a walk. So when I had gone with the letter he put a bullet into his forehead from a revolver. When I came back his cook was waiting for the whole yard to hear.

It's a great sin said the fish hawk in a husky voice and he shook his head. a great sin.

From too much learning said the porter taking a trick. his wits outstripped his wisdom. Sometimes he would sit writing papers all night.

Play pe ant. But he was a nice gentleman. And so white-skinned black haired and tall. He is a good lodger.

It seems the fair sex is at the bottom of it said the coachman slapping the nine of trumps on the king of diamonds. It seems he was fond of another man's wife and disliked his own. it does happen.

The king rebels said the porter.

At that moment there was again a ring from the yard. The rebellious king spat with vexation and went out. Shadows like dancing couples flitted across the windows of the lodge. There was the sound of voices and hurried footsteps in the yard.

I suppose the doctors have come again said the coachman. Our Mikhailo is run off his legs.

A strange wailing voice rang out for a moment in the air. Alyoshka looked in alarm at his grandfather, the coachman, then at the windows and said:

He trooked on the head at the gate yesterday and said: What did it let you come from today? Grandfather, who was that howled just now?

His grandfather trimmed the light in the lantern and made no answer.

The man's lost. I said little later with a yawn. He is lost and his tail is ruined, too. It's a disgrace for his children for the rest of their lives now.

The porter came back and stood down by the lantern.

He said and he said: They have sent it to the almshouse for the old women to lay him out.

The kind words of heaven and eternal peace to him, whispered the coachman, and he crossed himself.

Looking at him, Alyoshka crossed himself too.

You can't pray for such a him, said the fish hawker.

Why not?

It's a sin.

That's true, the porter assented. Now his soul has gone straight to hell to the devil.

It's a sin, repeated the fish hawker, such as he have no funeral, no requiem, but are buried like carrion with no respect.

The old man put on his cap and got up.

It was the same thing at our lady's, he said.

pulling his cap on further. We were serf in those days the younger son of our mistress the General's lady shot himself through the mouth with a pistol from too much learning too. It seem that by law such have to be buried outside the cemetery without priests without a requiem service but to save his race our lady you know bribed the police and the doctors and they gave her a paper to say her son had done it when delirious not knowing what he was doing. You can do anything with money. So he had a funeral with priests and every honour the music played and he was buried in the church for the deceased General had built that church with his own money and all his family were buried ther. Only this is what happened friends. One month passed and then another and it was all right. In the third month they informed the General's lady that the watchmen had come from that same church. What did they want? They were brought to her they fell at her feet. We can't go on serving your excellency they said. Look out for other watchmen and graciously dismiss us. What for? No they said we can't possibly your son howls under the church all night.

Alyoshka shuddered and pressed his face to the coachman's back so as not to see the windows.

At first the General's lady would not listen continued the old man. All this is your fancy you simple folk have such notions she said. A dead man cannot howl. Some time afterwards the watchmen came to her again and with them the sacristan. So the sacristan too had heard him

to witness. The General's lady saw that it was a
 banquet. She located herself in her bedroom with
 the window open. Here, my friend, here are
 the most terrible for you and for that go by
 the time were so that no one could hear or see
 to dig up my unhappy son, and bury him sh
 in the cemetery. And I suppose he
 died as a gl. And the waiters did

The inscription on it is there
 to this day but himself the General son is
 on the cemetery. O Lord forgive us
 our transgressions. And the fish-hawker

There is the spot where you can see when our mar
 ge for such people the words before Trinity

You must not go to bed for their
 sake, it is a sin, but you must feed the birds for the
 sake of their souls. The General lady used to go
 out to the cross-roads every third day to feed the
 birds. Once at the cross-roads a black dog sud
 denly appeared. It ran up to the bread and was
 such a we all know what it did, was. The
 General lady was like a half-crazy creature for
 five days afterwards. She neither ate nor drank.

All at once she fell on her knees in the garden
 and prayed and prayed. Well, good bye
 friend, the blessing of God and the Heavenly
 Father be with you. Let us go. Ah, lo, you'll
 open the gate for me.

The fish-hawker and the porter went out. The
 coachman and Alyosinka went out too, so as not to
 be left in the coach-house.

The man was living and dead. And the
 coachman, looking towards the window where

shadows were still flitting to and fro. Only this morning he was walking about the yard and now he is lying dead.

The time will come and we shall die too, said the porter walking away with the fish hawker and at once they both vanished from sight in the darkness.

The coachman and Alyoshka after a time somewhat timidly went up to the lighted window. A very pale lady with large tear-stained eyes and a fine-looking grey-headed man were moving two card tables into the middle of the room probably with the intention of laying the dead man upon them and on the green cloth of the table numbers could still be seen written in chalk. The cook who had run about the yard waiting in the morning was now standing on a chair stretching up to try and cover the looking-glass with a towel.

Grandfather, what are they doing? asked Alyoshka in a whisper.

They are just going to lay him on the tables, answered his grandfather. Let us go, child, it is bedtime.

The coachman and Alyoshka went back to the coach house. They said their prayers and took off their boots. Stepan lay down in a corner on the floor. Alyoshka in a sled. The door of the coach house were shut, there was a terrible stench from the extinguished lantern. A little later Alyoshka sat up and looked about him. Through the crack of the door he could still see a light from those lighted windows.

Grandfather I am frightened! he said

Come go to sleep go to sleep

I t h ou I am frightered

What are y u frightened of? What a baby

They were silent

Alyoshka suddenly jumped out of the sledge and loudly weeping ran to his grandfather

What is it? What the matter? cried the coachman in a fright getting up also

He is howling

Who h who?

I am frightened grandfather do you hear?

The coachman listened

It's their crying h said Come! there little silly They are sad so they are crying

I want to go home his grandson went on sobbing and trembling all over Grandfather let us go back to the village to mammy come grandfather dear God will give you the heavenly kingdom for it

What a silly ah Come be quiet! be quiet! Be quiet I will light the lantern, silly

The coachman fumbled for the matches and lighted the lantern But the light did not comfort Alyoshka

Grandfather Stop! let's go to the village he besought him weeping I am frightened her h oh how frightened I am And why did you bring me from the village accursed man?

Who's an accursed man? You must not use such disrespectful words to your lawful grandfather I shall whip you

Do whip me grandfather do beat me like Sidor's goat but only take me to mammy for God's mercy!

Come come grandson come! the coachman said kindly It's all right don't be frightened I am frightened myself Say your prayers

The door creaked and the porter's head appeared Arent you asleep Stepan? he asked I shan't get any sleep all night he said coming in I shall be opening and shutting the gates all night What are you crying for Alyoshka?

He is frightened the coachman answered for his grandson

Again there was the sound of a wailing voice in the air The porter said

They are crying The mother can't believe her eyes It's dreadful how upset she is

And is the father there?

Yes The father is all right He sits in the corner and says nothing They have taken the children to relations Well Stepan shall we have a game of trumps?

Yes the coachman agreed scratching himself and you Alyoshka go to sleep Almost big enough to be married and blubbering you rascal Come go along grandson go along

The presence of the porter reassured Alyoshka He went not very resolutely towards the sledge and lay down And while he was falling asleep he heard a half whisper

I beat and cover said his grandfather

I beat and cover repeated the porter

The bell rang in the yard the door creaked and seemed also saying "I beat and cover." When Alyshka dreamed of the gentleman and frightened by his eyes jumped up and burst out crying it was morning his grandfather was snoring and the coach house no longer seemed terrible.

PANIC FEARS

DURING all the years I have been living in this world I have only three times been terrified.

The first real terror which made my hair stand on end and made shivers run all over me was caused by a trivial but strange phenomenon. It happened that having nothing to do one July evening I drove to the station for the newspapers. It was a still warm almost sultry evening like all those monotonous evenings in July which when once they have set in go on for a week a fortnight or sometimes longer in regular unbroken succession and are suddenly cut short by a violent thunderstorm and a lavish downpour of rain that refreshes everything for a long time.

The sun had set some time before and an unbroken gray dusk lay all over the land. The mawkishly sweet scents of the grass and flowers were heavy in the motionless stagnant air.

I was driving in a rough trolley. Behind my back the garden-rs son Lashka a boy of eight years old whom I had taken with me to look after the horse in case of necessity was gently snoring with his head on a sack of oats. Our way lay along a narrow by road straight as a ruler which lay hid like a great snake in the tall thick reeds. There was

a pale light from the afterglow of sunset a streak of light cut its way through a narrow uncouth locking cloud which seemed sometimes like a boat and sometimes like a man wrapped in a quilt

I had driven a mile and a half or two miles when against the pale background of the evening glow there came into sight one after another some graceful tall poplars a river glistened beyond them and a gorgeous picture suddenly as though by magic lay stretched before me I had to stop the horse for our straight road broke off abruptly and ran down a steep incline overgrown with bushes We were standing on the hillside and beneath us at the bottom lay a huge hole full of twilight of fantastic shapes and of space At the bottom of this hole on a wide plain guarded by the poplars and caressed by the gleaming river nestled a village It was now sleeping Its huts its church with the belfry its trees stood out against the grey twilight and were reflected darkly in the smooth surface of the river

I waked Pashka for fear he should fall out and began cautiously going down

Have we got to Lukovo? asked Pashka, lifting his head lazily

Yes He led the reins

I led the horse down the hill and looked at the village At the first glance one strange circumstance caught my attention at the very top of the belfry in the tiny window between the cupola and the bells a light was twinkling This light was like that of a mouldering lamp at once dimly dying down at another flickering up What could

it come from? Its source was beyond my comprehension. It could not be burning at the window for there were neither ikons nor lamps in the top turret of the belfry: there was nothing there as I knew but beams, dust and spiders' webs. It was hard to climb up into that turret for the passage to it from the belfry was closely blocked up.

It was more likely than anything else to be the reflection of some outside light, but though I strained my eyes to the utmost I could not see one other speck of light in the vast expanse that lay before me. There was no moon. The pale and by now quite dim streak of the afterglow could not have been reflected for the window looked not to the west but to the east. These and other similar considerations were straying through my mind all the while that I was going down the slope with the horse. At the bottom I sat down by the roadside and looked again at the light. As before it was glimmering and flaring up.

Strange I thought lost in conjecture
Very strange

And little by little I was overcome by an unpleasant feeling. At first I thought that this was vexation at not being able to explain a simple phenomenon, but afterwards when I suddenly turned away from the light in horror and caught hold of Pashka with one hand it became clear that I was overcome with terror.

I was seized with a feeling of loneliness, misery and horror as though I had been flung down against my will into this great hole full of shadows.

where I was tamed all alone with the belliv
look at me with its red eye

Pashka I cried closing my eyes in horror
Well?

Pashka with its little gleaming on the belliv?

Pashka looked over my shoulder at the belliv
and gave a yawn

What can it be?

This brief conversation with the boy reassured
me for a little but not for long Pashka seeing
my uneasiness fastened his big eyes upon it I bit
looked at the animal again at the little

I am frightened it whispered

At this point beside myself with terror I clutched
the boy with one hand I dodged up to him and
gave him a violent lash

It is stupid I said to myself That pheno-
menon is only terrible because I do not understand
it every thing good is terrible and is mysterious

I tried to persuade myself but at the same time
I did not leave off looking at the belliv When we
reached the post station I purposefully stood for
a full hour chatting with the overseer and read
through two or three newspapers but the feeling
of uneasiness did not leave me On the way back
the light was not to be seen but on the other hand
the silhouettes of the butt of the poplars and of the
tall up which I had to climb seemed to me as though
animated And why the light was there I don't
know to this day

The second terror I experienced was excited by
a circumstance no less trivial I was return-
ing from a romantic interview It was one o'clock

at night the time when nature is buried in the soundest sweetest sleep before the dawn That time nature was not sleeping and one could not call the night a still one Corn-rakes quail nightingales and woodcocks were calling crickets and grasshoppers were churrying There was a light mist over the grass and cloud were scurrying straight ahead across the sky near the moon Nature was awake as though afraid of missing the best moments of her life

I walked along a narrow path at the very edge of a railway embankment The moonlight glided over the lines which were already covered with dew Great shadows from the clouds kept flitting over the embankment Far ahead a dim green light was glimmering peacefully

So everything is well I thought looking at them

I had a quiet peaceful comfortable feeling in my heart I was returning from a tryst I had no need to hurry I was not sleepy and I was conscious of youth and health in every sigh every step I took rousing a dull echo in the monotonous hum of the night I don't know what I was feeling then but I remember I was happy very happy

I had gone not more than three quarters of a mile when I suddenly heard behind me a monotonous sound a rumbling rather like the roar of a great stream It grew louder and louder every second and sounded nearer and nearer I looked round a hundred paces from me was the dark copse from which I had only just come there the embankment turned to the right in a graceful

ur dashed among the trees. I stood still in perplexity and waited. A huge black body appeared twice at the turn noisily darted towards me and with the swiftness of a bird flew past me along the rails. Less than half a minute passed and the blur had vanished the rumble melted away into the noise of the night.

It was an ordinary goods truck. There was nothing peculiar about it in itself but its appearance without an engine and in the night puzzled me. Where could it have come from and what force sent it flying so rapidly along the rails? Where did it come from and where was it flying to?

If I had been superstitious I should have made up my mind that it was a party of demons and witches journeying to a devil's sabbath and should have gone on my way but as it was the phenomenon was absolutely inexplicable to me. I did not believe my eyes, and was entangled in conjectures like a fly in a spider's web.

I suddenly realized that I was utterly alone on the whole vast plain that the night which by now seemed inhospitable was peeping into my face and dogging my footsteps all the sounds the cries of the birds the whisperings of the trees seemed sinister and existing simply to alarm my imagination. I dashed on like a madman, and without realizing what I was doing I ran, trying to run faster and faster. And at once I heard something to which I had paid no attention before that is, the plaintive whining of the telegraph wires.

This is beyond everything I said trying to shame myself It s cowardice ! it s silly

But cowardice was stronger than common sense I only slackened my pace when I reached the green light where I saw a dark signal box and near it on the embankment the figure of a man probably the signalman

Did you see it ? I asked breathlessly

See whom ? What ?

Why a truck ran by

I saw it the peasant said reluctantly

It broke away from the goods train Ther is an incline at the ninetyeth mile the train is dragged uphill The coupling on the last truck gave way so it broke off and ran back There is no catching it now

The strange phenomenon was explained and its fantastic character vanished My panic was over and I was able to go on my way

My third fright came upon me as I was going home from stand shooting in early spring It was in the dusk of evening The forest road was covered with pool from a recent hower of rain and the earth squelched under ones feet The crimson glow of sunset flooded the whole forest colouring the white stems of the birches and the young leaves I was exhausted and could hardly move

Four or five miles from home walking along the forest road I suddenly met a big black dog of the water spaniel breed As he ran by the dog looked intently at me straight in my face and ran on

A nice dog ! I thought Whose is it ?

I looked round. The dog was standing ten paces off with his eyes fixed on me. For a minute we scanned each other in silence then the dog probably flattered by my attention came slowly up to me and wagged his tail.

I walked on the dog followed me.

Whose dog is it? I kept asking myself. Where does he come from?

I knew all the county gentry for twenty or thirty miles round and knew all their dogs. Not one of them had a spaniel like that. How did he come to be in the depths of the forest on a track used for nothing but carting timber? He could hardly have dropped behind someone passing through for there was nowhere for the gentry to drive to along that road.

I sat down on a stump to rest and began scrutinizing my companion. He too sat down raised his head and fastened upon me an intense stare. He gazed at me without blinking. I don't know whether it was the influence of the stillness the shadows and sounds of the forest or perhaps a result of exhaustion but I suddenly felt uneasy under the steady gaze of his ordinary doggy eyes. I thought of Faust and his bulldog and of the fact that nervous people sometimes when exhausted have hallucinations. That was enough to make me get up hurriedly and hurriedly walk on. The dog followed me.

Go away! I barked.

The dog probably liked my voice for he gave a gleeful jump and ran about in front of me.

Go away! I shouted again.

The dog looked round stared at me intently and wagged his tail good humouredly. Evidently my threatening tone amused him. I ought to have patted him but I could not get Faust's dog out of my head and the feeling of panic grew more and more acute. Darkness was coming on which completed my confusion and every time the dog ran up to me and hit me with his tail like a coward I shut my eyes. The same thing happened as with the light in the belfry and the truck on the railway. I could not stand it and rushed away.

At home I found a visitor an old friend who after greeting me began to complain that as he was driving to me he had lost his way in the forest and a splendid valuable dog of his had dropped behind.

THE BET

THE BET

I

It was a dark autumn night. The old banker was walking up and down his study and remembering how fifteen years before he had given a party one autumn evening. There had been many clever men there and there had been interesting conversations. Among other things they had talked of capital punishment. The majority of the guests among whom were many journalists and intellectual men disapproved of the death penalty. They considered that form of punishment out of date, immoral and unsuitable for Christian States. In the opinion of some of them the death penalty ought to be replaced everywhere by imprisonment for life.

"I don't agree with you," said their host the banker. "I have not tried either the death penalty or imprisonment for life, but if one may judge *a priori* the death penalty is more moral and more humane than imprisonment for life. Capital punishment kills a man at once, but lifelong imprisonment kills him slowly. Which execution is the more humane, he who kills you in a few minutes or he who drags the life out of you in the course of many years?"

Both are equally immoral observed one of the guests for they both have the same object—to take away life. The State is not God. It has not the right to take away what it cannot restore when it wants to.

Among the guests was a young lawyer, a young man of five and twenty. When he was asked his opinion he said:

The death sentence and the life sentence are equally immoral but if I had to choose between the death penalty and imprisonment for life I would certainly choose the second. To live anyhow is better than not at all.

A lively discussion arose. The banker who was younger and more nervous in these days was suddenly carried away by excitement, he struck the table with his fist and shouted at the young man:

It's not true. I'll bet you ten millions you wouldn't stay in solitary confinement for five years.

If you mean that in earnest said the young man, I'll take a bet but I would stay not five but fifteen years.

Fifteen? Don't cried the banker. Gentle men, I take two millions.

Agreed. You take your millions and I stake my freedom said the young man.

And this wild senseless bet was carried out. The banker spoilt and frivolous with millions beyond his reckoning was delighted at the bet. At supper he made fun of the young man, and said:

Think better of it you gentlemen while there is still time. Ten two millions are a trifle but you

are losing three or four of the best years of your life. I say three or four because you won't stay longer. Don't forget either you unhappy man that voluntary confinement is a great deal harder to bear than compulsory. The thought that you have the right to step out in liberty at any moment will poison your whole existence in prison. I am sorry for you.

And now the banker walking to and fro remembered all this and asked himself. What was the object of that bet? What is the good of that man's losing fifteen years of his life and my throwing away two millions? Can it prove that the death penalty is better or worse than imprisonment for life? No no. It was all nonsensical and meaningless. On my part it was the caprice of a pampered man and on his part simple greed for money.

Then he remembered what followed that evening. It was decided that the young man should spend the years of his captivity under the strictest supervision in one of the lodges in the banker's garden. It was agreed that for fifteen years he should not be free to cross the threshold of the lodge to see human beings to hear the human voice or to receive letters and newspapers. He was allowed to have a musical instrument and books and was allowed to write letters to drink wine and to smoke. By the terms of the agreement the only relations he could have with the outer world were by a little window made purposely for that object. He might have anything he wanted—books music wine and so on—in any

quantity he desired by writing an order but could only receive it through the window. The agreement provided for every detail and every trifle that would make his imprisonment strictly solitary and bound the young man to stay there *exactly* fifteen years beginning from twelve o'clock of November 14 1870 and ending at twelve o'clock of November 14 1885. The slightest attempt on his part to break the conditions if only two minutes before the end released the banker from the obligation to pay him two millions.

For the first year of his confinement as far as one could judge from his brief notes the prisoner suffered severely from loneliness and depression. The sounds of the piano could be heard continually day and night from his lodge. He refused wine and tobacco. Wine however excites the desires and desires are the worst foes of the prisoner and besides nothing could be more dreary than drinking good wine and seeing no one. And tobacco spoilt the air of his room. In the first year the books he sent for were principally of a light character now is with a complicated and sensational and fantastical stories and so on.

In the second year the prisoner was allowed into the lodge and the prisoner asked only for the classics. In the fifth year music was admitted again and the prisoner asked for wine. Those who watched him through the window said that all that year he spent doing nothing but eating and drinking and lying on his bed frequently yawning and angrily talking to himself. He did not read books. Some times at night he would sit down to write

he would spend hours writing and in the morning tear up all that he had written. More than once he could be heard crying.

In the second half of the sixth year the prisoner began zealously studying languages, philosophy and history. He threw himself eagerly into these studies—so much so that the banker had enough to do to get him the books he ordered. In the course of four years some six hundred volumes were procured at his request. It was during this period that the banker received the following letter from his prisoner.

My dear Gaoler I write you these lines in six languages. Show them to people who know the languages. Let them read them. If they find not one mistake I implore you to fire a shot in the garden. That shot will show me that my efforts have not been thrown away. The geniuses of all ages and of all land speak different languages but the same flame burns in them all. Oh if you only knew what unearthly happiness my soul feels now from being able to understand them. The prisoner's desire was fulfilled. The banker ordered two shots to be fired in the garden.

Then after the seventh year the prisoner sat immovably at the table and read nothing but the Gospel. It seemed strange to the banker that a man who in four years had mastered six hundred learned volumes should waste nearly a year over one thin book, easy of comprehension. Theology and histories of religion followed the Gospels.

In the last two years of his confinement the prisoner read an immense quantity of books quite

indiscriminately. At one time he was busy with the natural sciences then he would ask for Byron or Shakespeare. There were notes in which he demanded at the same time books on chemistry and a manual of medicine and a novel and some treatise on philosophy or theology. His reading suggested a man swimming in the sea among the wreckage of his ship and trying to save his life by greedily clutching first at one spar and then at another.

II

The old banker remembered all this and thought

To-morrow at twelve o'clock he will regain his freedom. By our agreement I ought to pay him two millions. If I do pay him it is all over with me. I shall be utterly ruined.

Fifteen years before his millions had been beyond his reckoning now he was afraid to ask himself which was greater his debt or his assets. Desperate gambling on the Stock Exchange wild speculation and the excitability which he could not get over even in advancing years had by degrees led to the decline of his fortune and the proud fearless self-confident millionaire had become a banker of muddling rank trembling at every rise and fall in his investments. Cursed bet muttered the old man clutching his head in despair. Why didn't the man die? He is only forty now. He will take my last penny from me he will marry will enjoy life will gamble on the Exchange while I shall look at him with envy like a beggar and hear from him every day that

same sentence I am indebted to you for the happiness of my life let me help you! No it is too much! The one means of being saved from bankruptcy and disgrace is the death of that man

It struck three o'clock the banker listened everyone was asleep in the house and nothing could be heard outside but the rustling of the chilled trees Trying to make no noise he took from a fireproof safe the key of the door which had not been opened for fifteen years put on his overcoat and went out of the house

It was dark and cold in the garden Rain was falling A damp cutting wind was racing about the garden howling and giving the trees no rest The banker strained his eyes but could see neither the earth nor the white statues nor the lodge nor the trees Going to the spot where the lodge stood he twice called the watchman No answer followed Evidently the watchman had sought shelter from the weather and was now asleep somewhere either in the kitchen or in the greenhouse

If I had the pluck to carry out my intention thought the old man suspicion would fall first upon the watchman

He felt in the darkness for the steps and the door and went into the entry of the lodge Then he groped his way into a little passage and lighted a match There was not a soul there There was a bedstead with no bedding on it and in the corner there was a dark cast iron stove The seals on the door leading to the prisoners' rooms were intact

When the match went out the old man trembling

With emotion peeped through the little window a candle was burning dimly in the prisoner's room. He was sitting at the table. Nothing could be seen but his back, the hair on his head and his hand. Open books were lying on the table on the two easy chairs and on the carpet near the table.

Fifteen minutes passed and the prisoner did not once stir. Fifteen years imprisonment had taught him to sit still. The bank-tapper tapped at the window with his finger and the prisoner made no movement, hate or no response. Then the banker cautiously broke the seal of the door and put the key in the whole. The rusty lock gave a grating sound and the door creaked. The banker expected to hear the first steps and a cry of astonishment but three minutes passed and it was as quiet as ever in the room. He made up his mind to go in.

At the table a man unlike ordinary people was sitting motionless. He was a skeleton with the skin drawn tight over his bones with long curls like a woman's and a shaggy beard. His face was yellow with an earthy tint in it, his cheeks were hollow, his back long and narrow and the hand on which his shaggy beard was propped was so thin and delicate that it was dreadful to look at it. His hair was already streaked with silver and seeing his emaciated aged look and face no one would have believed that he was only forty. He was asleep. In front of his bowed head there lay on the table a sheet of paper on which there was something written in fine handwriting.

Poor creature! thought the banker, he is

a leap and most likely dreaming of the millions. And I have only to take this half-dead man throw him on the bed stifle him a little with the pillow and the most conscientious expert would find no sign of a violent death. But let us first read what he has written here.

The banker took the page from the table and read as follows:

To-morrow at twelve o'clock I regain my freedom and the right to associate with other men but before I leave this room and see the sunshine I think it necessary to say a few words to you. With a clear conscience I tell you in the name of God who beholds me that I desire freedom and life and health and all that in your books is called the good things of the world.

For fifteen years I have been intently studying earthly life. It is true I have not seen the earth nor men but in your books I have drunk fragrant wine I have sung songs I have hunted stags and wild boars in the forests I have loved women. Beauties as ethereal as clouds created by the magic of your poets and geniuses have visited me at night and have whispered in my ears wonderful tales that have set my brain in a whirl. In your books I have climbed to the peaks of Elburz and Mont Blanc and from there I have seen the sun rise and have watched it at evening flood the sky the ocean and the mountain tops with gold and crimson. I have watched from there the lightning flash over my head and cleaving the storm cloud. I have seen green forests fields rivers lakes towns. I have heard the singing of the

mens and the strains of the shepherds' pipes
 I have heard the cries of comely devils who
 flew down to converse with me of God. In
 your book I have flung myself into the bottomless
 pit, performed miracles, slain burned towns,
 preached new religions, conquered whole king-
 doms.

Your books have given me wisdom. All that
 the unresting thought of man has created in the
 ages is compressed into a small compass in my
 brain. I know that I am wiser than all of you.

And I despise your books. I despise wisdom
 and the blessings of this world. It is all worthless,
 fleeting, illusory, and deceptive like a mirage.
 You may become powerful and fine, but death will
 wipe you off the face of the earth as though you
 were no more than mice burrowing under the floor,
 and your posterity, your history, your immortal
 geniuses will burn or freeze to ether with the
 earthly globe.

You have lost your reason and taken the
 wrong path. You have taken lies for truth and
 hideousness for beauty. You would marvel if
 owing to some strange event of some sort, frogs and
 lizards suddenly grew on apple and orange trees
 instead of fruit, or if roses began to smell like a
 sweating horse, so I marvel at you who exchange
 heaven for earth. I don't want to understand
 you.

To prove to you in action how I despise all
 that you love, by I enounce the two millions of
 which I once dreamed as of paradise and happiness.
 I despise. To deprive myself of the right to it.

money I shall go out from here five hours before the time fixed and so break the compact

When the banker had read this he laid the page on the table kissed the strange man on the head and went out of the lodge weeping At no other time even when he had lost heavily on the Stock Exchange had he felt so great a contempt for himself When he got home he lay on his bed but his tears and emotion kept him for hours from sleeping

Next morning the watchmen ran in with pale faces and told him they had seen the man who lived in the lodge climb out of the window into the garden go to the gate and disappear The banker went at once with the servants to the lodge and made sure of the flight of his prisoner To avoid arousing unnecessary talk he took from the table the writing in which the millions were renounced and when he got home locked it up in the fireproof safe

THE HEAD CARDENERS STORY

THE HEAD GARDENER'S STORY

A SALE of flowers was taking place in Count V's greenhouses. The purchasers were few in number—a landowner who was a neighbour of mine, a young timber merchant and myself. While the workmen were carrying out our magnificent purchases and packing them into the carts we sat at the entry of the greenhouse and chatted about one thing and another. It is extremely pleasant to sit in a garden on a still April morning listening to the birds and watching the flowers brought out into the open air and basking in the sunshine.

The head gardener, Mikhail Karlovitch, a venerable old man with a full shaven face wearing a fur waistcoat and no coat, superintended the packing of the plants himself, but at the same time he listened to our conversation in the hope of hearing something new. He was an intelligent, very good-hearted man, respected by everyone. He was for some reason looked upon by everyone as a German, though he was in reality on his father's side Swedish, on his mother's side Russian, and attended the Orthodox church. He knew Russian, Swedish and German. He had read a good deal in those languages and nothing one could do gave him greater pleasure than lending him

some were talking to him for instance about Jhen

He did have addresses but they were innocent & he called himself the head gardener though there were no regarders to the expression. He himself was usually dignified and haughty & could not fail to be contradicted, and liked to be listened to with respect and attention.

That young fellow with the I can recommend to you as an awful rascal & my neighbour pointing to a labourer with a warily gipsy face who drove by with the water barrel. Last week he was tried in the court for burglary and was acquitted & pronounced to be mentally deranged & I look at him & see the picture of health. Scoundrels are very often acquitted now & so Russia on ground of abnormality and aberration & these acquittals these unmistakable proofs of an indulgent attitude to crime lead to no good. If you realize that masses the sense of justice is blunted in all as they become accustomed to seeing & unpunished and you know in our age on my bold say in the words of Shakespear that in our evil and corrupt age virtue must ask forgiveness of vice.

That's very true the merchant assented.

Owing to these frequent equitals murder and arson has become much more common. Ask the peasants

What Karlovitch turned towards us and said

As far as I am concerned gentlemen I am always delighted to meet with these verdicts of not guilty. I am not afraid for morality and justice

when they say Not guilty but on the contrary I feel pleased. Even when my conscience tell me the jury have made a mistake in acquitting the criminal even then I am triumphant. Judge for yourselves gentlemen if the judges and the jury have more faith in man than in evidence material proof and speeches for the prosecution is not that faith in man in itself higher than any ordinary considerations? Such faith is only attainable by those few who understand and feel Christ.

A fine thought I said

But it's not a new one. I remember a very long time ago I heard a legend on that subject. A very charming legend said the gardener and he smiled. I was told it by my grandmother my father's mother an excellent old lady. She told me it in Swedish and it does not sound so fine so classical in Russian.

But we begged him to tell it and not to be put off by the coarseness of the Russian language. Much gratified he deliberately lit his pipe looked angrily at the labourers and began.

There settled in a certain little town a solitary plain old gentleman called Thomson or Wilson—but that does not matter the surname is not the point. He followed an honourable profession he was a doctor. He was always morose and unsociable and only spoke when required by his profession. He never visited anyone never extended his acquaintance beyond a silent bow and lived as humbly as a hermit. The fact was he was a learned man and in those days learned men were not like other people. They spent their days and

as is in contempt to readers and medical disease looked upon everything as trivial and had no time to waste a word. The inhabitants of the town understood this and tried not to worry him with their visits and empty chatter. They were very glad that God had sent them at last a man who could heal diseases and were proud that such a remarkable man was living in their town.

He knows everything, they said about him.

But that was not enough. They ought to have said also. He knows everyone. In the breast of that learned man there beat a wonderful angelic heart. Though the people of the town were strangers and not his own people, yet he loved them like children and did not spare himself for them. He was himself ill with consumption, he had a cough, but when he was summoned to the sick, he forgot his own illness, he did not spare himself and gasping for breath climbed up the hills however high they might be. He disregarded the dirty heat and the cold, drenched thirst and hunger. He would accept no money and trying to save when one of his patients died, he would follow the coffin with the relations weeping.

And soon he became so necessary to the town that the inhabitants wondered how they could have got on before without the man. Their gratitude knew no bounds. Grown up people and children, good and bad alike, honest men and cheats—all in fact respected him and knew his value. In the little town and all the surrounding neighbourhood there was no man who would allow himself to do anything disagreeable to him, indeed they would

never have dreamed of it. When he came out of his lod in he never fastened the doors or windows in complete confidence that there was no thief who could bring himself to do him wrong. He often had in the course of his medical duties to walk along the highroads through the forests and mountains haunted by numbers of hungry vagrants but he felt that he was in perfect security.

One night he was returning from a patient when robbers fell upon him in the forest but when they recognized him they took off their hats respectfully and offered him something to eat. When he answered that he was not hungry they gave him a warm trip and accompanied him as far as the town happy that fate had given them the chance in some small way to show their gratitude to the benevolent man. Well to be sure my grandmother told me that even the horses and the cows and the dogs knew him and expressed their joy when they met him.

And this man who seemed by his sensitivity to have guarded himself from every evil to whom even brigands and frenzied men wished nothing but good was one fine morning found murdered. Covered with blood with his skull broken he was lying in a ravine and his pale face wore an expression of amazement. Yes not horror but amazement was the emotion that had been fixed upon his face when he saw the murderer before him. You can imagine the grief that overwhelmed the inhabitants of the town and the surrounding districts. All were in despair unable to believe their eyes wondering who could have killed the man.

The judges who conducted the enquiry and examination of the case had said: "If we have all the evidence against him, but as there is not a man in the world capable of murdering our doctor obviously it was a case of murder and the combination of all these facts is simply incredible. We must suppose that in this darkness he fell into the ravine of life and was fatally injured."

The whole town agreed with this opinion. The doctor was buried and nothing more was said about the case. The sentence of a man who could be so careless and wickedness to kill the doctor seemed incredible. There is almost a general feeling of satisfaction.

All the town fully believed that chance led them to discovering the murderer. A servant who had been many times convicted of theft for his viciousness was seen drinking from a coffee box and watching that it all belonged to the doctor. When he was questioned he was confused and answered with a "I don't know how I made and in his bed was found a hurt with stains of blood on the sleeves and a doctor's lancet set in gold. What more evidence was wanted? They put the criminal in prison. The inhabitants were indignant and at the same time said:

"It's incredible! It can't be so. Take care that a mistake is not made. It does happen you know that evidence tells a false tale."

At his trial the murderer obstinately denied his guilt. Everything was against him and to be convinced of his guilt was as easy as to believe that the earth is black but the judges seem to have

gone mad they watched every proof ten times looked distrustfully at the witnesses flushed crimson and sipped water. The trial began early in the morning and was only finished in the evening.

Accused! the chief judge said addressing the murderer the court has found you guilty of murdering Dr. Lo-and-so and has sentenced you to

The chief judge meant to say to the death penalty but he dropped from his hands the paper on which the sentence was written wiped the cold sweat from his face and cried out

No! May God punish me if I judge wrongly but I swear he is not guilty. I cannot admit the thought that there exists a man who would dare to murder our friend the doctor. A man could not sink so low!

There cannot be such a man the other judges assented.

No! the crowd cried. Let him go.

The murderer was set free to go where he chose and not one soul blamed the court for an unjust verdict. And my grandmother used to say that for such faith in humanity God forgave the sins of all the inhabitants of that town. He rejoices when people believe that man is His image and semblance and grieves if forgetful of human dignity they judge worse of men than of dogs. The sentence of acquittal may bring harm to the inhabitant of the town but on the other hand think of the beneficial influence upon them of that faith in man—a faith which does not remain dead you know it raises up generous feelings in us

and always impels us to love and respect every man Every man And that is important

But all Karlovitch had finished My neighbour would have urged some objection but the head gardener made a gesture that signified that he did not like objections then he walked away to the carts and with an expression of dignity went on looking after the packing

THE BEAUTIES

THE BEAUTIFUL

I

I REMEMBER when I was a high school boy in the fifth or sixth class I was driving with my grandfather from the village of Bolshoe Krzepko on the Donre onto Potov on the Don. It was a sultry languidly dreary day of August. Our eyes were glued to ether and our mouths were parched from the heat and the dry burning wind which drove clouds of dust to meet us. One did not want to look or speak or think and when our drowsy driver, a Little Russian called Karpo, swung his whip at the horses and lashed me on my lap I did not protest or utter a sound but only rousing myself from half slumber gazed muddily and dejectedly into the distance to see whether there was a village visible through the dust. We stopped to feed the horses in a big Armenian village at a rich Armenian's whom my grandfather knew. Never in my life have I seen a greater caricature than that Armenian. Imagine a little shaven head with thick overhanging eyebrows a beak of a nose long grey moustaches and a wide mouth with a long cherry wood club sticking out of it. This little head was clumsily attached to a lean hunchback carcass attired in a fantastic garb a short red

ja ket and full bright blue trousers. This figure walked traddling its legs and shuffling with its hoppers spoke without taking the chibouk out of its mouth and behaved with truly Armenian dignity not smiling but staring with wide-open eyes and trying to take as little notice as possible of its guest.

There was neither wind nor dust in the Armenian's rooms but it was just as unpleasant stifling and dreary as in the steppe and on the road. I remember dusty and exhausted by the heat I sat in the corner in a green box. The unpainted wooden walls the furniture and the floors coloured with yellow ochre smelt of dry wood baked by the sun. Wherever I looked there were flies and flies and flies. Grandfather and the Armenian were talking about grazing about manure and about oats. I knew that they would be a good hour getting the samovar that grandfather would be not less than an hour drinking his tea and then would lie down to sleep for two or three hours that I should waste a quarter of the day waiting after which there would be again the heat the dust the jolting cart. I heard the muttering of the two voices and it began to seem to me that I had been seeing the Armenian the cupboard with the crockery the flies the windows with the burning sun beating on them for ages and ages and should only cease to see them in the far-off future and I was seized with hatred for the steppe the sun the flies.

A little Russian peasant woman in a kerchief brought in a tray of tea things then the samovar

The Armenian went slowly out into the passage and shouted Mashya come and pour out tea Where are you Mashya?

Hurried footsteps were heard and there came into the room a girl of sixteen in a simple cotton dress and a white kerchief. As she washed the crockery and poured out the tea she was standing with her back to me and all I could see was that she was of a slender figure barefooted and that her little bare heels were covered by long trousers.

The Armenian invited me to have tea. Sitting down to the table I glanced at the girl who was handing me a glass of tea and felt all at once as though a wind were blowing over my soul and blowing away all the impressions of the day with their dust and dreariness. I saw the beautiful features of the most beautiful face I have ever met in real life or in my dreams. Before me stood a beauty and I recognized that at the first glance as I should have recognized lightning.

I am ready to swear that Masha—or as her father called her Mashy—was a real beauty but I don't know how to prove it. It sometimes happens that clouds are huddled together in disorder on the horizon and the sun hiding behind them colours them and the sky with tints of every possible shade—crimson orange gold lilac muddy pink—one cloud is like a monk another like a fish a third like a Turk in a turban. The glow of sunset enveloping a third of the sky gleams on the cross on the church flashes on the windows of the manor house is reflected in the river and the puddles quivers on the trees far far away

against the background of the sunset a flock of wild ducks is flying homewards. And the boy herding the cows and the surveyor driving in his chase over the dam and the gentleman out for a walk all gaze at the sunset and every one of them thinks it terribly beautiful but no one knows or can say in what its beauty lies.

I was not the only one to think the Armenian girl beautiful. My grandfather, an old man of seventy, gruff and indifferent to women and the beauties of nature, looked caressingly at Mascha for a full minute and asked:

"Is that your daughter, Aset Nazartch?"

"Yes, she is my daughter," answered the Armenian.

"A fine young lady," said my grandfather approvingly.

An artist would have called this Armenian girl's beauty classical and ever-renewed; just that beauty, the contemplation of which—God knows why!—inspires in one the conviction that one is seeing correct features, that their eyes, nose, mouth, neck, bosom, and every movement of the young body all go together in one complete harmonious accord in which nature has not blundered over the smallest line. You fancy for no reason that the ideally beautiful woman must have such a nose as Mascha's straight and slightly quiline; that such great dark eyes, such long lashes, such a languid glance; you fancy that her black curly hair and eyebrows go with the soft white tint of her brow and cheeks as the green reeds go with the quiet stream.

Masha's white neck and her youthful bosom were not fully developed but you fancy the sculptor would need a great creative genius to mould them. You gaze and little by little the desire comes over you to say to Masha something extraordinarily pleasant sincere beautiful as beautiful as she herself was.

At first I felt hurt and abashed that Masha took no notice of me but was all the time looking down. It seemed to me as though a peculiar atmosphere proud and happy separated her from me and jealously screened her from my eyes.

That's because I am covered with lust. I thought I am sunburnt and am still a boy.

But little by little I forgot myself and gave myself up entirely to the consciousness of beauty. I thought no more now of the dreary steppe of the dust no longer heard the buzzing of the flies no longer tasted the tea and felt nothing except that a beautiful girl was standing only the other side of the table.

I felt this beauty rather strangely. It was not desire nor ecstasy nor enjoyment that Masha excited in me but a painful though pleasant sadness. It was a sadness vague and undefined as a dream. For some reason I felt sorry for myself for my grandfather and for the Armenian even for the girl herself and I had a feeling as though we all four had lost something important and essential to life which we should never find again. My grandfather too grew melancholy. He talked no more about manure or about oats but sat silent looking peacefully at Masha.

After tea my grandfather lay down for a nap while I went out of the house into the porch. The house like all the houses in the Armenian village stood in the full sun there was not a tree not an awning no shade. The Armenian's great courtyard overgrown with goosefoot and wild mallows, was lively and full of gaiety in spite of the great heat. Threshing was going on behind one of the low hurdles which intersected the big yard here and there. Round a post stuck into the middle of the threshing floor ran dozens of horses harnessed side by side so that they formed one long adumbration. A Little Russian in a long waistcoat and full trousers was walking beside them cracking a whip and shouting in a tone that sounded as though he were jeering at the horses and showing off his power over them.

A—a—a you damn d brutes A—a—a,
pligu tak y u! Are you frightened?

The horses sorrel white and piebald not understanding why they were made to run round in one place and to crush the wheat straw ran unwillingly as though with effort swinging their tails with an offended air. The wind raised up perfect clouds of golden dust from under their hoofs and carried it a way far beyond the hurdle. Near the tall fresh stacks peasant women were sowing with rakes and carts were moving and beyond the stacks in another yard another dozen similar horses were running round a post and a similar Little Russian was cracking his whip and jeering at the horses.

The tops of which I was sitting were hot on the

thin rails and here and there on the window frames sap was oozing out of the wood from the heat red ladybirds were huddling together in the streaks of shadow under the steps and under the shutters. The sun was baking me on my head on my chest and on my back but I did not notice it and was conscious only of the thud of bare feet on the uneven floor in the passage and in the rooms behind me. After clearing away the tea things Masha ran down the steps fluttering the air as she passed and like a bird flew into a little grimy outhouse—I suppose the kitchen—from which came the smell of roast mutton and the sound of angry talk in Armenian. She vanished into the dark doorway and in her place there appeared on the threshold an old bent red-faced Armenian woman wearing green trousers. The old woman was angry and was scolding someone. Soon afterwards Masha appeared in the doorway flustered with the heat of the kitchen and carrying a big black loaf on her shoulder swaying gracefully under the weight of the bread she ran across the yard to the threshing floor darted over the hurdle and wrapt in a cloud of golden chaff vanished behind the carts. The Little Pussian who was driving the horses lowered his whip sank into silence and gazed for a minute in the direction of the carts. Then when the Armenian girl darted again by the horses and leaped over the hurdle he followed her with his eyes and shouted to the horses in a tone as though he were greatly disappointed.

Plague take you unclean devil
And all the while I was unceasingly hearing her

bar flew and seeing how she walked across the yard with a grave preoccupied face. She ran down the steps swishing the air about her now to the kitchen now to the threshold floor now through the gate and I could hardly turn my head quickly enough to watch her.

And the oftener she flitted by me with her beauty the more acute became my sadness. I felt sorry both for her and for myself and for the little Russian who mournfully watched her every time she anthered to the load of柴 to the carts. Whether it was envy of her beauty or that I was regretting that the girl was not mine and never would be or that I was a stranger to her or whether I vaguely felt that her rare beauty was accidental unnecessary and like everything on earth of short duration or whether perhaps my sadness was that peculiar feeling which is excited in man by the contemplation of real beauty God only knows.

The three hours of waiting passed unnoticed. It seemed to me that I had not had time to look properly at Masha when Karpo drove up to the river bathed the horse and began to put it in the shafts. The wet horse snorted with pleasure and kicked his hoofs against the shafts. Karpo shouted to it: Back! My grandfather woke up. Masha opened the creaking gates for us, we got into the chaise and drove out of the yard. We drove in silence as though we were angry with one another.

When two or three hours later Postov and Nahitchev appeared in the distance Karpo

who had been silent the whole time looked round quickly and said

A fine evening that at the Armenian s
And he lashed his horses

II

Another time after I had become a student I was travelling by rail to the south. It was May. At one of the stations I believe it was between Byelgorod and Harkov I got out of the train to walk about the platform.

The shades of evening were already lying on the station garden on the platform and on the fields the station screened off the sunset but on the topmost clouds of smoke from the engine which were tinged with rosy light one could see the sun had not yet quite vanished.

As I walked up and down the platform I noticed that the great number of the passengers were standing or walking near a second class compartment and that they looked as though some celebrated person were in that compartment. Among the curious whom I met near this compartment I saw however an artillery officer who had been my fellow traveller an intelligent cordial and sympathetic fellow—as people mostly are whom we meet on our travels by chance and with whom we are not long acquainted.

What are you looking at there? I asked.

He made no answer but only indicated with his eyes a feminine figure. It was a young girl of seventeen or eighteen wearing a Russian dress with

her head bare and a little shawl flung carelessly on one shoulder—not a passenger but I suppose a sister or daughter of the station master—was standing near the carriage window talking to an elderly woman who was in the train. Before I had time to realize what I was seeing I was suddenly overwhelmed by the feeling I had once experienced in the Armenian village.

The girl was remarkably beautiful and that was unmistakable to me and to those who were looking at her as I was.

If one is to describe her appearance feature by feature as the practice is the only really lovely thing was her thick wavy fair hair which hung loose with a black ribbon tied round her head all the other features either irregular or very ordinary. Either from a peculiar form of coquettishness or from shortsightedness her eyes were screwed up her nose had an undecided tilt her mouth was small her profile was feebly and indifferently drawn, her shoulders were narrow and undeveloped for her age—and yet the girl made the impression of being really beautiful and looking at her I was able to feel convinced that the Russian face does not need strict regularity in order to be lovely what is more that if instead of her turning up her nose the girl had been given a different more correct and plastically irreproachable like the Armenian girl I fancy her face would have lost all its charm from the change.

Standing at the window talking the girl shrugging at the evening damp continually looking round at us at one moment put her arms akimbo at

the next raised her hands to her head to straighten her hair talked laughed while her face at one moment wore an expression of wonder the next of horror and I don't remember a moment when her face and body were at rest The whole secret and magic of her beauty lay just in these tiny infinitely elegant movements in her smile in the play of her face in her rapid glances at us in the combination of the subtle grace of her movements with her youth her freshness the purity of her soul that sounded in her laugh and voice and with the weakness I love so much in children in birds in fawns and in young trees

It was that butterfly's beauty so in keeping with waltzing darting about the garden laughter and gaiety and incongruous with serious thought grief and repose and it seemed as though a gust of wind blowing over the platform or a fall of rain would be enough to wither the fragile body and scatter the capricious beauty like the pollen of a flower

So—o! the officer muttered with a sigh when after the second bell we went back to our compartment

And what that So—o meant I will not undertake to decide

Perhaps he was sad and did not want to go away from the beauty and the spring evening into the stuffy train or perhaps he like me was unaccountably sorry for the beauty for himself and for me and for all the passengers who were helplessly and reluctantly sauntering back to their compartments As we passed the station

window at which a pale red haired telegraphist with upstanding curl and a faded broad cheeked face was sitting beside his apparatus the officer hurried a step and said

I bet that that telegraphist is in love with that pretty girl. To hide out in the wilds under one roof with that ethereal creature and not fall in love is beyond the power of man. And what a calamity my friend what an ironical fate to be stooping unkempt grey a decent fellow and not a fool and to be in love with that pretty stupid little girl who would never take a scrap of notice of you. Or worse still imagine that telegraphist is in love and at the same time married and that his wife is as stooping as unkempt and as decent a person as himself.

On the platform between our carriage and the next the guard was standing with his elbows on the railing looking in the direction of the beautiful girl and his battled wrinkled unpleasantly bearded face excited by sleepless nights and the jolting of the train gave a look of tenderness and of the deepest sadness a thought in that girl lies my happiness his own youth soberness purity wife children as though he were repenting and feeling in his whole being that that girl was not his and that for him with his premature old age his unyouthfulness and his bearded face the ordinary happiness of a man and a passenger was as far away as heaven.

The third bell rang the whistles sounded and the train slowly moved off. First the guard the station master then the gendarmes the beautiful

girl with her exquisitely sly smile passed before our windows

Putting my head out and looking back I saw how looking after the train she walked along the platform by the window where the telegraph clerk was sitting smoothed her hair and ran into the garden The station no longer screened off the sunset the plain lay open before us but the sun had already set and the smoke lay in black clouds over the green velvety young corn It was melancholy in the spring air and in the darkening sky and in the railway carriage

The familiar figure of the guard came into the carriage and he began lighting the candles

THE SHOEMAKER AND
THE DEVIL

THE SHOEMAKER AND THE DEVIL

It was Christmas Eve. Marya had long been snoring on the stove. All the paraffin in the little lamp had burnt out, but Fyodor Nilov still sat at work. He would long ago have flung aside his work and gone out into the street, but a customer from Kolokolny Lane, who had a fortnight before ordered some boots, had been in the previous day, had abused him roundly, and had ordered him to finish the boots at once before the morning service.

It's a convict's life! Fyodor grumbled as he worked. Some people have been asleep long ago while others are enjoying themselves while you sit here like some Cain and sew for the devil knows whom.

To save himself from accidentally falling asleep, he kept taking a bottle from under the table and drinking out of it, and after every pull at it he twisted his head and said aloud:

What is the reason kindly tell me, that customers enjoy themselves while I am forced to sit and work for them? Because they have money and I am a beggar?

He looked at all his customers, especially the one who lived in Kolokolny Lane. He was a gentle-

man of gloomy appearance with long hair a yellow face blue spectacles and a husky voice. He had a German name such one could not pronounce. It was impossible to tell what was his call and what he did. When a fortnight before Fyodor had gone to take his measure he the master was sitting on the floor pounding something in a mortar. Before Fyodor had time to say good morning the contents of the mortar suddenly flared up and burned with a bright red flame like as a tank of sulphur and burnt feather and the room was filled with a thick pink smoke so that Fyodor sneezed five times and as he returned home afterwards he thought

Any one who feared God would not have anything to do with things like that.

When there was nothing left in the bottle Fyodor put the boots on the table and sank into thought. He leaned his heavy head on his fist and began thinking of his poverty of his hard life with no glimpse of betterment. Then he thought of the children of the rich houses and their carriages of the hundred rouble notes.

How nice it would be if the houses of these rich men—the devil fly them!—were smashed if their horses died if their fur coats and sable caps got shabby! How splendid it would be if the

children by little changed into beggars having nothing and he a poor shoemaker were to become rich and were to lend it over some other poor shoemaker on Christmas Eve.

Dream or likelihood thus Fyodor suddenly thought this while and pondered yes.

Here's a go he thought looking at the boots. The job has been finished ever so long ago and I go on sitting here. I must take the boots to the gentleman.

He wrapped up the work in a red handkerchief put on his thing and went out into the street. A fine hard snow was falling, pricking the lace as though with needles. It was old slippery dark the gas lamps burned dimly and for some reason there was a smell of paraffin in the street so that Fyodor coughed and cleared his throat. Rich men were driving to and fro on the road and every rich man had a tin and a bottle of vodka in his hands. Rich young ladies peeped at Fyodor out of the carriages and sledges put out their tongues and shouted laughing.

Beggar! Beggar!

Students officers and merchants walked behind Fyodor jeering at him and crying.

Drunkard! Drunkard! Infidel cobbler! Soul of a boot leg! Beggar!

All this was insulting but Fyodor held his tongue and only spat in disgust. But when Kuzma Lebiodkin from Warsaw a master box-maker met him and said I've married a rich woman and I have money working and time while you are a beggar and have nothing to eat Fyodor could not refrain from running after him. He pursued him till he found him sitting in Klokotny Lane. His custom lived in the fourth house from the corner on the very top floor. To reach him one had to go through a long dark courtyard and then to climb up a very high slippery stair.

case which tottered under on a foot. When Frodor went in to him he was sitting on the floor prodding with him a mortar just as he had been the fortnight before.

Your honour I have brought your boots, and Frodor saluted.

The cauldron got up and began tramping on the boards in silence. Desiring to help him, Frodor went down on one knee and pulled off his old boot but as the cauldron jumped up and staggered towards the door in horror. The cauldroner had not a foot but a hoof like a horse.

What about Frodor here ago!"

The cauldroner had had to cross himself then to lose everything and run downstairs but he immediately reflected that he was meeting a devil for the first and probably the last time, and not to take advantage of his services would be foolish. He controlled himself and determined to try his luck. Clapping his hands behind him to avoid making the sign of the cross, he coughed respectfully and began.

There is that there is nothing on earth more evil and more than the devil but I am of the opinion, your honour that the devil is highly educated. He has—excess my saying—hoof and a tail behind but he has more brains than many a student.

I have you for what you are and the devil, I have said. Thank you, shoemaker! What do you want?

And without loss of time the shoemaker began complaining of his lot. He began by saying that

from his childhood up he had envied the rich. He had always resented it that all people did not live alike in big houses and drive with good horses. Why he asked was he poor? How was he worse than Kuzma Lebyodkin from Warsaw who had his own house and whose wife wore a hat? He had the same sort of nose the same hands feet head and back as the rich and so why was he forced to work when others were enjoying themselves? Why was he married to Marya and not to a lady smelling of scent? He had often seen beautiful young ladies in the houses of rich customers but they either took no notice of him whatever or else sometimes laughed and whispered to each other. What a red nose that shoemaker has! It was true that Marya was a good kind hard working woman but she was not educated her hand was heavy and hit hard and if one had occasion to speak of politics or anything intellectual before her she would put her spoke in and talk the most awful nonsense.

What do you want then? his customer interrupted him.

I beg you your Honour Satan Ivanitch to be graciously pleased to make me a rich man.

Certainly. Only for that you must give me up your soul! Before the cocks crow go and sign on this paper here that you give me up your soul!

Your Honour said Fyodor politely when you ordered a pair of boots from me I did not ask for the money in advance. One has first to carry out the order and then ask for payment.

Oh, very well—the customer answered. At the same time he ruffled up in the mortar pink till the smoke came puffing out and there was a small burnt feather and sulphur. When the smoke had subsided Fyodor rubbed his eyes. I saw that there was no longer any odor, no longer a tinner, but quite a different man wearing a waistcoat and a watch chain in a new pair of trousers and that he was sitting in an arm-chair at the dining-table. Two footmen were handing him dishes, bowls, and plates.

Kindly attend to him, for and may it do you good!

What wealth! The footmen handed him a big piece of salt meat and a dish of cucumbers and then brought him a pan of roast goose and a little afterwards a baked pork with horse-radish cream. And how dimmed how genteel it all was! Fyodor sat and before each dish drank a big glass of excellent vodka like some general of some count. After the pork he was handed some boiled grammars stewed with goose fat then an omelette with bacon fat then fried liver and he went on eating and was delighted. What more! They served too a pease with onion and teamed it up with kvass.

How is it that the gentry don't burst with such meals? he thought.

In conclusion they handed him a big pot of honey. After dinner the devil appeared in blue spectacles and asked in a low bow:

Are you satisfied with your dinner, Fyodor Pantelyevich?

But Fyodor could not answer or word he was so stuffed after his dinner. The feeling of repletion was unpleasant, oppressive and to distract his thoughts he looked at the boot on his left foot.

For a boot like that I used it to take less than seven and a half roubles. What shoemaker made it? he asked.

Kuzma Lebyodkin, an old-time shoemaker.

Send for him this fool!

Kuzma Lebyodkin from Warsaw soon made his appearance. He stepped in a respectful attitude at the door and asked:

What are your orders, your honour?

Hold your tongue! cried Fyodor and stamped his foot. Don't dare to argue, remember your place as a boot-maker. Blackhead! You don't know how to make boots. I'll beat your ugly phiz to jelly! Why don't you come?

To my house.

What money? He said. Come on Saturday! By give him a cuff!

But he at once recalled what a life the customers used to lead him to, and he felt heavy at heart and to distract his attention he took his fat pocket-book out of his pocket and began counting his money. There was a good deal of money but Fyodor wanted more still. The devil in the blue spectacles brought him another notebook fatter still but he wanted even more and then more he counted it the more discontented he became.

In the evening the evil one brought him a full-bottomed lady in a red dress and said that this

was his new wife. He spent the whole evening kissing her and eating gingerbread, and at night he went to bed on a soft downy feather bed turned from side to side and could not go to sleep. He felt uncanny.

"We have a great deal of money," he said to his wife, "we must look out or thieves will be breaking in. You had better go and look with a candle."

He did not sleep all night and kept getting up to see if his box was all right. In the morning he had to go to church to matins. In church the same honour did not rich and poor alike. When Fyodor, as poor he used to pray in church like this: "God forgive me a sinner!" He said the same thing now though he had become rich. What difference as there? And after death Fyodor rich would not be buried in gold or in diamonds but in the same black earth as the poorest beggar. Fyodor would burn in the same fire as cobblers. Fyodor resented all this and too he felt weighed down all over by his dinner and instead of peace he had all sorts of thoughts in his head about his box of money, about thieves, about his badly ruined soul.

He came out of church in a bad temper. To drive away his unpleasant thought as he had often done before he struck up a song at the top of his voice. But as soon as he began a policeman ran up and said with his finger to the peak of his cap:

"Your honour, gentlefolk must not sing in the street! You are not a housemaid!"

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Fyodor leaned his back against a fence and fell to thinking what could he do to amuse himself?

Your honour a porter shouted to him don't lean against the fence you will spoil your fur coat!

Fyodor went into a shop and bought himself the very best concertina then went out into the street playing it. Everybody pointed at him and laughed.

And a gentleman too the cabmen jeered at him like some cobbler.

Is it the proper thing for gentlefolk to be disorderly in the street? a policeman said to him. You had better go into a tavern!

Your honour give us a trifle for Christ's sake the beggars waited surrounding Fyodor on all sides.

In earlier days when he was a shoemaker the beggars took no notice of him now they wouldn't let him pass.

And at home his new wife the lady was waiting for him dressed in a green blouse and a red skirt. He meant to be attentive to her and had just lifted his arm to give her a good clout on the back but she said angrily.

Peasant! Ignorant lout! You don't know how to behave with ladies! If you love me you will kiss my hand I don't allow you to beat me.

This is a blasted existence! thought Fyodor. People do lead a life! You mustn't sing you mustn't play the concertina you mustn't have a lark with a lady. Plooi!

He had no sooner sat down to tea with the lady when the evil spirit in the blue spectacles appeared and said

Come Fyodor Pant lyetch I have performed my part of the bargain Now sign your paper and come along with me!

And he dragged Fyodor to hell straight to the furnace and devils flew up from all directions and shouted

Fool! Blockhead! Ass!

There was a fearful smell of paraffin in hell enough to suffocate one

And suddenly it all vanished Fyodor opened his eyes and saw his table the boots and the tin lamp The lamp-glass was black and from the faint light on the clock came clouds of stinking smoke as from a chimney Near the table stood the customer in the blue spectacles looking angrily

Fool! Blockhead! Ass! I'll give you a lesson you scoundrel! You took the order a fortnight ago and the boots aren't ready yet! Do you suppose I want to come trapesing round here half a dozen times a day for my boots? You watch! you brute!

Fyodor took his head and set to work on the boots The customer went on swearing and threatening him for a long time At last when he subsided Fyodor asked sullenly

And what is your occupation sir?

I make Bengal lights and fireworks I am a pyrotechnician

They began ringing for matins Fyodor gave

the cutlery & the boots, took the money for them and went to church.

Carriages and sledges with bear skin rug were dashing to and fro in the street. Merchant and soldiers were walking along the pavement together with the humbler folk. But I could not envy them nor repent at his lot. It seemed to him now that rich and poor were equally badly off. Some were able to drink in a carriage and others to sing songs at the top of their voice and to play the concertina but none and the same thing the same grave awaits them all alike and there was nothing in life for which one could give the devil even a tiny scrap of one's soul.